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Hafa Adai!

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IN ENDING THE CW PROGRAM

'Irreversible damage likely'

By ERWIN ENCINARES
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REPORTER

A joint resolution introduced in a House of Representatives session yesterday is seeking public support for "legislative relief" on Public Law 110-229, the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008.

Rep. Angel A. Demapan (R-Saipan) introduced yesterday House Joint Resolution 20-07, which supports the CNMI government and private sector efforts in seeking "legislative relief through amendments to U.S. Public Law 110-229." According to the resolution, it supports the efforts amend the law in order to con-

See CW on Page 4

MISS MARIANAS KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA

Nine young women will vie for the title of Miss Marianas 2018 this February. Yesterday, the nine women, gathered at the Surf Club Saipan, shared more about themselves and what they hope to do if they achieve their goal.

AS RESULT OF RISE IN FUEL PRICES

CUC hikes Dec. power charge

There has been a rise in the average world fuel prices, affecting the fuel adjustment charge of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. effective December.

In a statement yesterday, CUC said it has been notified by Mobil Oil Mariana Islands, Inc. of the increase in average fuel prices.

As a result, the current FAC rate of $0.16886 per kWh will be increased to $0.18231 per kWh effective Dec. 1, 2017.

See CUC on Page 4

IPI: We have workers leaving every week

By ERWIN ENCINARES
erwin_encinares@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The 3,000 worker slots that were cut from the CW-1 program this fiscal year affects not just mom-and-pop stores but also large employers like Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC, which says it is losing construction workers weekly.

According to the progress report it submitted to the Commonwealth Casino Commission in mid-September

See IPI on Page 4

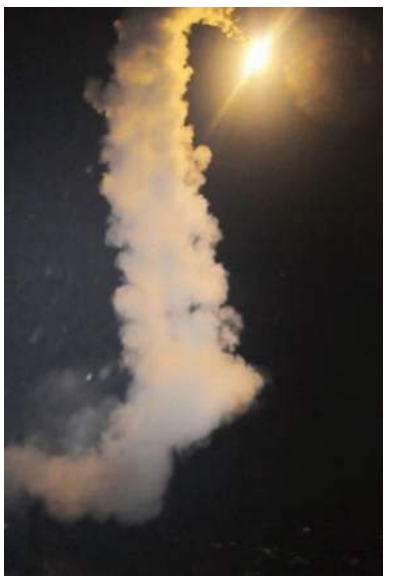
N. Korea launches ICBM in possibly its longest-range test yet

By KIM TONG-HYUNG and FOSTER KLUG
ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)— After 2 ½ months of relative peace, North Korea launched its most powerful weapon yet early Wednesday, claiming a new type of intercontinental ballistic missile that some observers believe could put Washington and the entire eastern U.S. seaboard within range.

The North said in a special televised announcement hours after the launch that it had successfully fired what it called the Hwasong-15, a new nuclear-capable ICBM that's "significantly more" powerful than the long-range weapons it's previ-

See N. KOREA on Page 4



In this photo provided by South Korea Defense Ministry, a 1,000-kilometer (621-mile) range ship-to-surface missile is launched from the South Korean Navy's Aegis destroyer in waters off South Korea's east coast in South Korea, during a military drill Wednesday, Nov. 29, 2017.

SOUTH KOREA DEFENSE MINISTRY VIA AP

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Local

Cutback in parole period for Chinese, Russian tourists eyed

By ERWIN ENCINARES
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REPORTER

A resolution that urges Gov. Ralph DLG Torres to shorten the length of stay of tourists under the Guam-CNMI parole program from the current 45 days to not more than 15 days is being studied.

Rep. Ivan A. Blanco (R-Saipan) has introduced House Resolution 20-09 that seeks to supports shortening the stay period of tourists from China and Russia from a maximum of 45 days to a maximum of 15 days. The resolution is still waiting for crucial data from federal agencies.

H.R. 20-09, according to its author Blanco, seeks to limit the stay period of specific tourists due to a "significant percentage" of parole violations through overstaying, working illegally, and birth tourism.

"[The resolution] is just trying to limit the…authorized days [of stay] of Chinese and Russian [visitors] from 45 days to 15 days because we are trying to prevent [birth tourism]," said Rep. Gregorio M. Sablan Jr. (R-Saipan).

Sablan chairs the House Federal and Foreign Affairs Committee.

According to Sablan, the committee is trying to meet with agents from Immigration and Customs Enforcement to "get some information" on the number of overstaying tourists, the number of illegal tourists, and more.

"Those are questions that need to be answered," he added. "Do they have an adequate number of agents here?"

Sablan said that members of the federal agencies the committee reached out to reportedly claimed that they were not at liberty to answer questions.

"As a citizen of the CNMI, we are all concerned with what is happening on our islands, most specially concerning birth tourism and illegal aliens," he said. "[Visitors] are welcome to come and stay, but [they should] stay legally."

Rep. Edwin K. Propst (Ind-Saipan) questioned whether shortening the length of stay for Chinese and Russian passport holders would appear discriminatory.

"We need to be very careful in [shortening the length of stay]. Tourism is important to us; we depend on all markets," he said.

According to Sablan, the language would be tweaked once data from the Department of Homeland Security is obtained.

"…If we [push through with HR 20-09], it could have a severe impact on our tourism, so we need to be smart in imposing something while at the same time we are not being discriminatory because we are just trying to address issues affecting our islands," he said.

According to FFA member Rep. Vinson Sablan (Ind-Saipan), all the committee wants are answers.

"We get asked day in and day out on what is going on with [overstaying tourists], birth tourism, parole program, visa waiver program… These are questions we could answer [only] to a certain extent," he said, adding that the real answers to the questions come from ICE and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services staff.

"We do not have jurisdiction over the staff of USCIS [and the other related agencies], but the issue-at-hand is happening on our islands and we want that information," he said. "Do they have that information? What approach are they taking to battle this issue of [overstaying tourists]?"

H.R. 20-09 has been tabled until the meeting with ICE.

COTA employs new transpo tracking software

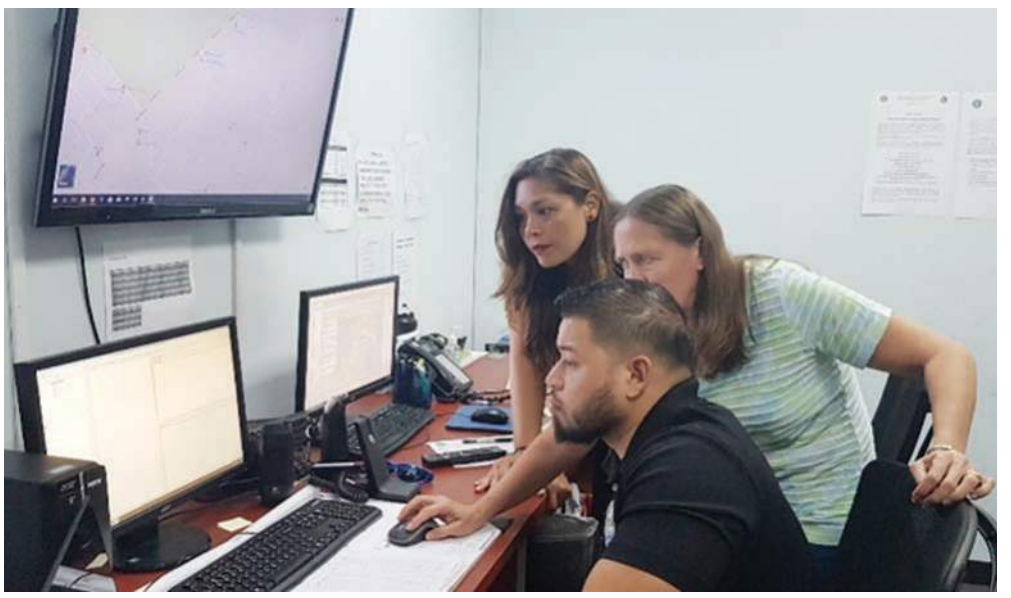
Following considerable investment and phased planning, the Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority under the Office of the Governor has announced the successful implementation of its long awaited transportation tracking software system for the current demand response and forthcoming fixed route public transportation system.

Through close collaboration with RouteMatch Software Inc., the implementation of this transportation tracking system represents significant progress and is a critical phase in COTA's development of the public transportation system in the CNMI.

RouteMatch Software, Inc. provides enterprise intelligent transportation systems and mobile data system deployments to public and private transit sectors. It offers software, hardware, and a wireless platform for fixed route management systems, demand response management systems, flex route services, coordination and mobility management, multi-modal traveler information systems, business intelligence/analytics, intelligent vehicles, and university and campus transportation. The company also provides non-emergency medical transportation; and transit asset management solutions. In addition, it offers customer support, training and education, implementation, consulting, and cloud services.

Alfreda P. Camacho, who heads COTA as special assistant for Public Transportation, said the new system reaffirms COTA's plans to deliver further improvements as the expansion of the much needed transit system launches.

"The implementation of our new tracking system delivers a series of benefits to our clients and our program, and it has progressively become very apparent. This includes improved yearly reporting for the Federal Transit Administration's National Transit Database, visibility of scheduling and dispatching data, and some 'under the bonnet' improvements which result in vastly improved services," Camacho said.



Route Match Software, Inc. program director Debbie Mayfield gives Operations and Maintenance coordinator Jose "Ping" Santos and special assistant for Public Transportation Alfreda P. Camacho a run- through of the integrated tracking system for COTA.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

RouteMatch program director Debbie Mayfield noted that this has been an exciting time for RouteMatch to be part of the demand and fixed route implementation for COTA.

"RouteMatch's demand application will allow schedulers and dispatchers to manage schedules for the riders more efficiently. The riders will need to be educated on a pickup window concept when calling in for ride. Part of RouteMatch's goal is helping with more effective schedules and increase ridership. The agency is installing new devices for the drivers, equipped with the RouteMatch application, which will provide a more accurate manifest to their drivers, ensuring correct pick up and drop off information. The tablets will help in reducing the amount of paper used for transit operations and allow for more efficient reporting. I believe the software is easy to learn and user-friendly. The drivers and dispatchers are doing great and quickly adapting and learning the software. This is a great group of people here at COTA, and I am glad to be part of their implementation," Mayfield said.

COTA operations and maintenance coordinator Jose "Ping" Santos added that the new software underscores the importance and commitment toward the proper execution of the fixed route system on Saipan.

"We have achieved this system migration and implementation with the expert knowledge of RouteMatch. The support we received was outstanding, meaning we were able to integrate into this system and 'go live' within a week of the contractor being on island," Santos said.

COTA staff described how the new software system has made their jobs a lot easier and more efficient.

"The RouteMatch software makes our work life easier by scheduling our clients quicker and efficiently and we save the environment by using less paper by inputting our client reservations in digital format," said transit information specialist John Demapan, who has worked at COTA for four years and is the office's longest running transit information specialist. Demapan successfully completed the software integration training.

"RouteMatch is a wonderful software that helps make our job a lot easier and quicker. It helps give our clients a more accurate time in scheduling them daily. RouteMatch saves our riders time over the phone and it saves our time in completing our tasks," said transit information specialist Shane Mendiola, who has been with COTA for six months.

"As a transit operator for COTA, it is a very big help

See COTA on Page 4

OVER SHIELDING OF BUCKINGHAM

Justices hear Ogumoro's appeal of his convictions

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The CNMI Supreme Court heard this week the appeal of former Department of Public Safety deputy commissioner Ambrosio T. Ogumoro, who wants the high court to reverse his convictions in shielding then-attorney general Edward Buckingham from being served with penal summons in 2012.

After listening to the parties' arguments, Associate Justice John A. Manglona and Justices pro tem Robert J. Torres and Elyze M. Iriarte placed the matter under advisement.

Ogumoro, through counsel Daniel Guidotti, appealed his convictions for conspiracy to commit theft of services, theft of services, and misconduct in public office.

Ogumoro raised three issues on appeal.

He argued that the evidence was insufficient to convict him of felony conspiracy to commit theft of services and theft of services.

Second, he argued that then-Superior Court associate judge David A. Wiseman erred by failing to instruct the jury on the lesser included offenses of misdemeanor theft of services and conspiracy to commit theft of services.

Finally, Guidotti asserted that Wiseman erred in convicting Ogumoro of misconduct in public office in violation of 6CMC Section 6101(a) as the statute poses no duty to serve an invalid penal summons.

Special prosecutor George Hasselback argued the government's opposition to the appeal.

In January 2015, a Superior Court jury found Ogumoro guilty of conspiracy to commit theft of services. Wiseman found him guilty of five misconduct in public office charges, one count of obstructing justice: interference with a law enforcement officer or witness, and one count of criminal coercion.

In March 2016, Wiseman slapped Ogumoro with a one-year prison term.

Ogumoro began serving his sentence on April 13, 2016. He was released on April 12, 2017.

In May 2017, the Superior Court jury found Ogumoro guilty of stealing a 1995 Toyota Tercel owned by DPS.

The jury found him guilty of theft by deception but not guilty of theft by unlawful taking.

Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo, who decided on the misdemeanor charges, found Ogumoro guilty of misconduct in public office, not guilty of two counts of removal of government property, and not guilty of one count of misconduct in public office.

According to the charges, Ogumoro brought a 1995 Toyota Tercel that belonged to DPS to a shop to be repaired using DPS funds in 2002 and then sold the vehicle as "scrap" to Herman M. Manglona.

Manglona is the brother of Ogumoro's common-law wife, Katherine Manglona.

The prosecution also alleged that Ogumoro instructed a DPS staff to bring a DPS desktop computer to a shop for repairs using DPS funds. The computer, along with a laptop, printer, and other DPS property, were later used in the office of True North Bar & Grill, which is owned by Ogumoro.

Last Sept. 12, Ogumoro walked free after Govendo imposed no prison term on him.

Ogumoro is also appealing his convictions in that case.

Janice E. Castro is new DCRM director

Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality administrator Eli D. Cabrera has appointed Janice E. Castro as director of the Division of Coastal Resources Management.

Castro has been the acting DCRM director since June.

"Ms. Castro has been serving as the acting director for DCRM for the past several months, and I am confident in her abilities to serve as the division's director," Cabrera said.

"Janice brings years of experience from both the government and private sector and has a deep passion for the environment. She has been doing very well as the acting director of DCRM, and has built a good relationship with our CRM board and our local and federal staffers within the division. She will be a great asset to DCRM and our environmental community moving forward," said Gov. Ralph DLG Torres.

Castro said she will work to uphold DCRM's mission of protecting the environment.

"DCRM works to protect and enhance the CNMI's coastal resources for both residents and visitors. Through effective and adaptive resource management, we strive to balance our environmental integrity with economic prosperity, while working toward building a more resilient and sustainable CNMI. With the current increase in development, it is critical that we continue to engage in early coordination with all interested developers and their consultants to ensure that any proposed project will not adversely impact our coastal resources. Through avoidance, minimization, and mitigation, we can work together to protect our valuable resources which contribute tremendously to our culture, livelihoods, and economy," Castro said.

Before moving back to the government, Castro was the executive assistant for Alter City Group, Inc. from April 2015 to May 2016. She was a former grants specialist in the Office of Grants Management under the Office of the Governor from July 2013 to December 2014.

In 2009, she was a natural resource planner for the Division of Environmental Quality, where she spearheaded the launch of the "Green Business Initiative."

In 2007, she was a campus sustainability assistant at Seattle University, where she developed a "Green Cleaning Guide" that addressed the hazards of everyday household cleaning products. She was also an environmental protection assistant for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Seattle.

A former CRM intern herself, she graduated from Seattle University with a bachelor's degree in environmental studies with a minor in philosophy in 2008. She received her associate degree from the Northern Marianas College in 2005. ***(PR)***

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NMHC: Ball is in Sablan's court

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

The Northern Marianas Housing Corp. now says that Rita Sablan herself caused the delay that prevented her from acquiring housing assistance.

In a previous article, Rita Sablan, 42, claimed that NMHC failed to provide her housing service for nearly six years. Sablan said she applied for multi-family housing (free housing) six years ago, was sent an eligibility notice in 2015 by NMHC, and lost her slot because she was in the hospital recovering from accidents that claimed both her legs.

NMHC administrator Jesse Palacios acknowledged Sablan's timeline, saying her claims match their records: that Sablan first applied in 2012 for multi-family housing (free housing) and was put on the waiting list until 2015 due to their long waiting list and lack of available housing. An eligibility notice was sent out but they got no response so NMHC was required to give Sablan's slot up.

Palacios said their records show that Sablan hadn't reached out to them until June and July 2017 requesting updates in regards to her housing application. According to a prior interview with Sablan, she said she had been reaching out to NMHC for nearly a year.

Palacios pointed out that NMHC caseworkers had informed Sablan of the possible steps she could take to get back into NMHC's waiting list. Unfortunately, NMHC records show that Sablan failed to submit the required evidence.

According to Palacios, there is nothing else that NMHC can do until proof of supporting evidence is submitted to their office.

Palacios said that if Sablan is able to turn in the justification needed, they can even consider bumping her to the top of the waiting list for multi-family housing, which is currently maxed out with over 200 families.

According to Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems Inc. executive director Jim Rayphand, the legality of the matter when it comes to housing assistance is that there are no preferences or prioritizing.

"Here's the hard truth about housing, disabled or otherwise, all individuals are considered equal," he said.

NMPASI program manager Jimmy Sablan said their records show no signs of Sablan seeking their assistance but it could possibly be because she didn't come to their office and just called for inquiries.

Jimmy Sablan and Rayphand said that when it comes to their part, their office is not able to grant housing, but they can plead for cases as an advocate group.

Rayphand said that he and his team are even willing to go out of their way, if needed, to visit Sablan personally if she is not able to make it to their office.

"When it comes down to it, we can only give them referrals or plead their case if necessary and sometimes we even go beyond that," said Rayphand.

Borja out of reach on eyed changes to succession law

Lawmakers connected to a bill that seeks to amend the law on mayoral succession were mysteriously silent yesterday, with efforts to solicit comments coming up nil.

Several attempts to contact Sen. Francisco Borja (R-Tinian) who introduced Senate Bill 20-79, which would alters the succession law for mayors went for naught and calls to interview the lawmaker on the bill were unanswered.

Borja's bill, if enacted, authorizes the governor to appoint a "qualified person" with the consent of the Senate to the position of mayor to an island or a group of islands if less than half of a mayor's term remains.

Attempts also made to reach out to Tinian senators Francisco Cruz (R-Tinian) and Jude Hofschneiders (R-Tinian) were unanswered as well.

Press secretary Kevin Bautista, speaking on behalf of Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and his administration, told *Saipan Tribune* in an email yesterday that the administration has no comments on the bill.

"[We have] no comment at this time. We respect the legislative process, and we'll allow the bill to run its course through both houses until it reaches the governor's desk for his action," the email stated.

S.B. 20-79 fails to specify the reason why the change is necessary, merely stating that the intent of the bill is to amend Commonwealth Code Section 5103.

"The Legislature finds that Article VI, 2(b) of the NMI Constitution provides that a vacancy in the office of mayor shall be filled by special election if one-half or more of the term remains and otherwise as provided by law. Accordingly, the purpose of this legislation is to amend 1 CMC Section 5103 to authorize the governor to appoint a qualified person to the office of mayor subject to the advice and consent of the Senate when there is a vacancy and less than half of the term of the mayor remains," the bill states.

Insistent rumors said the bill was prompted by rumors that Tinian Mayor Joey Patrick San Nicolas will resign in early January 2018. He has denied the rumor, adding that he supports a "move by the Legislature to amend the law regarding mayor vacancies."

Hypothetically, if San Nicolas were to let go of his position as Tinian mayor, current law provides that Ramon Dela Cruz, who garnered the second highest number of votes during the 2014 general elections, would step up to be San Nicolas' successor for the remainder of the term—if he is willing.

The governor would only appoint a candidate for Tinian mayor if candidates who ran in the previous elections decline the position.

S.B. 20-79, if enacted, would stop that, leaving Tinian without a mayor for a period of time before the governor appoints a suitable candidate and the Senate confirms the appointment. ***(Erwin Encinares)***

N. KOREA

From Page 1

ously tested. Outside governments and analysts backed up the North's claim to a jump in missile capability.

A resumption of Pyongyang's torrid testing pace in pursuit of its goal of a viable arsenal of nuclear-tipped missiles that can hit the U.S. mainland had been widely expected, but the apparent power and suddenness of the new test still jolted the Korean Peninsula and Washington. The launch at 3:17 a.m. local time and midday in the U.S. capital indicated an effort to perfect the element of surprise and to obtain maximum attention in the United States.

In a government statement released through state media, North Korea said the Hwasong-15, the "greatest ICBM," could be armed with a "super-large heavy nuclear warhead" and striking the "whole mainland" of the United States. The North said the missile, which was fired near the capital Pyongyang, reached a maximum height of 4,475 kilometers (2,780 miles) and traveled 950 kilometers (590 miles) before accurately hitting a sea target, similar to the flight data announced by South Korea's military.

CUC

From Page 1

Residential customers who use 500 kilowatt-hours of power per month will pay approximately $6.72 more in their monthly billing.

The FAC is one of two components that make up the CUC electric rate, which is used to purchase fuel. The second component is the CUC base rate, which is used to fund operations, projects, and debt service. This base rate has not been increased since April 17, 2014.

CUC is required, pursuant to an order previously issued by the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission, to increase the FAC pass-through rate when the Mean of Platts Singapore monthly pricing equals or exceeds a 4.5-percent differential of the average per gallon cost of fuel used in the calculation of the current FAC rate.

CUC first instituted the Levelized Energy Adjustment Clause in 2009 to recover fuel and fuel related costs, a system also used by power providers in Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands. In May 2015, CPUC authorized CUC to change the name of LEAC to FAC to provide customers a more accurate description of the electric rate.

CUC is a non-profit autonomous agency of the CNMI government, which provides electric power, water, and wastewater services to the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. ***(CUC)***

CW

From Page 1

tinue the CNMI economy's growth.

P.L. 110-229, a law enacted during the tenure of former U.S. president George W. Bush, extended federal immigration to the CNMI, took over local immigration, created the CNMI-Only Transitional Worker program for the CNMI's foreign workers, and set a sunset provision—a deadline for the CW program to expire.

According to P.L. 110-229, the CW program was supposed to expire in 2014 but this was extended to 2019.

In yesterday's H.J.R. 20-07, it cited a U.S. Government Accountability Office report, which said that if the CW-1 program is eliminated, the CNMI economy will be affected "26 to 62 percent, resulting in the loss of millions of dollars in revenue."

"GAO also concluded that ending the CW-1 program would negatively affect CNMI businesses, resulting in the loss of services and employment to CNMI residents," H.J.R. 20-07 said.

"The effects of ending the CW program will more than likely cause irreversible damage to the CNMI economy, impacting the livelihood of every man, woman, and child," it added.

According to Demapan, H.J.R. 20-07 is the CNMI Legislature's "effort to unify support with our business community."

"We have come such a long way in our economic recovery and I would hate to see all the efforts and successes of the CNMI disappear as a result of a flawed federal law," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

"Residents and nonresidents alike are concerned about the future of their employment in the event that businesses have to make sacrifices, be it reduction in services or completely closing their doors."

Demapan said that, while the CNMI is calling out for change, one thing remains constant: "P.L. 110-229 is needed and has been needed since our business and government officials were pleading for help in Washington years ago," he said.

According to Demapan, the House would act on H.J.R. 20-07 at their next session before heading to the Senate for concurrence.

IPI

From Page 1

2017 on its construction project in Garapan, IPI claimed total number of 581 workers.

Yesterday, that number was dramatically down to only 207 remaining construction workers working on the Imperial Pacific Resort.

"The biggest issue [to the progress of IPR] are the [lack of] workers," IPI executive officer Eric Poon told CCC members.

This December, several more construction workers would have to leave the island due to the CW-1 cuts for fiscal year 2018, Poon added.

He told the CCC that they have been in contact with 37 local contractors in an effort to get more construction workers.

"[With the CW-1 issue], we have workers leaving every week and the numbers keep reducing," Poon replied when CCC chair Juan Sablan asked how the number of workers for November, which was 291, plummeted to only 207 in just one month.

On the bright side, Poon said, IPI is currently negotiating with three potential contractors with access to U.S.-eligible workers. Poon's report said the contractors were from Guam, Hawaii, and Saipan. However, he did not disclose the names of these companies, saying they were still negotiating.

IPI's general contractor used to be MCC International but that company became embroiled in a scheme of employing illegal workers, resulting in the loss of many workers. Poon said that MCC no longer has workers working on the construction of IPR.

When asked when IPI could strike up an agreement with their potential sources of workers, Poon replied that he could get an agreement "within this week."

"We are looking at 100 to 200 U.S.-[eligible] construction workers," Poon said, adding that within a week, a solid answer may be provided to the CCC.

CCC executive director Edward Deleon Guerrero asked if Poon is still comfortable with the August 2018 completion deadline for IPR, to which Poon responded, "Yes."

According to IPI official reports, completion percentage of the casino resort was estimated at 63 percent, same as their previous report to CCC during the last CCC meeting in late October 2017. A mid-September 2017 IPI progress report stated that their progress displayed a difference of 3 percent. Their July 2017 progress report was reportedly at 59 percent while their mid-September 2017 progress report was at 62 percent.

COTA

From Page 2

using the tablets now. We can actually find the rider's pick up and drop off location using the installed navigation system. In addition, it is convenient because it classifies the client, what mode of payment or pass each client will obtain before pick up, and assists greatly with the practicality of scheduling for both the drivers and clients," said transit operator Jun Del Rosario, who has been with COTA for four months.

"The understanding and cooperation of our clients, partner agencies, and the entire community during the integration and implementation of the transportation tracking software system was also an important factor in the successful transition from the old system (manual) to the new. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their understanding and support throughout the process," Camacho added.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres said this is another big and exciting advancement for COTA.

"Plans for this project started back in July 2013, but movement on this project did not start until July 2015, when I appointed Alfreda to administer COTA. The project would not have gotten off the ground until Alfreda and her team stepped up to finish it. After almost two and a half years of weekly meetings with RouteMatch and their perseverance, COTA successfully migrated over to the transportation tracking software system on Nov. 7, 2017. This is another important step for COTA moving forward for our community," Torres added.

This project was funded in whole by federal grant funds from the Federal Transportation Administration through the U.S. Department of Transportation. ***(PR)***

Hitchhiker allegedly robs motorist of 2 rings

Angui

Gioda

Police arrested on Tuesday a habitual offender who allegedly robbed a motorist near the Chalan Kanoa Cemetery. Police also nabbed the suspect in the stabbing of a man in As Lito.

Hilario Angui, 34, was arrested for allegedly robbing a Filipino man of his two rings. Police recovered one of the rings and impounded Angui's car after allegedly finding evidence of drugs and drug paraphernalia in the vehicle.

In the stabbing case, police detectives arrested the suspect, identified as 24-year-old Michael Salesy Ilo Gioda.

In the robbery case, the 42-year-old Filipino man told police he was driving down a dirt road near the Chalan Kanoa Cemetery on Tuesday at 10am when Angui flagged him down, according to acting Department of Public Safety spokesman Lt. Jason Tarkong yesterday.

Knowing Angui, the motorist stopped the car. Angui opened the back passenger door and entered the backseat.

The victim reached out behind him to grab Angui's hand for a handshake. Angui, however, allegedly pulled the victim's left arm back, twisted it, and pulled out the two rings from the victim's hand.

Angui then exited the car. The victim was so scared of what happened that he only reported the matter to police later that day.

At 2:04pm that same day, Tuesday, police arrived at Angui's house in Chalan Kanoa, where they saw the suspect sitting in the driver's seat of a Matrix sedan.

Police allegedly recovered one of the victim's stolen rings inside Angui's car. They also discovered evidence of drugs and drug paraphernalia in the car.

The two rings were valued at $240.

In the stabbing case, police detectives located Gioda, who allegedly cooperated with police and confessed to the crime.

Gioda was arrested on Tuesday at 9:13pm for the charges of assault with a dangerous weapon.

» Suspect in As Lito stabbing arrested too

The victim, a 34-year-old Chinese man, suffered multiple injuries when the suspect attacked him with a sharp object or a knife in the parking lot of Hollywood Video in As Lito last Monday night.

Police learned that the victim picked up the suspect in front of the Saipan Mayor's Office in Chalan Laulau. The suspect told the victim to drop him off in San Antonio. On their way, the suspect redirected the victim to instead drop him off at Hollywood Video in As Lito.

As the victim was parking the car in front of Hollywood Video, the suspect attacked him with a sharp object, possibly a knife. The victim fought off the suspect, who got off the car and ran away.

The victim drove to Green Consume Market in As Lito, where police were then called. An ambulance brought him to the Commonwealth Health Center for treatment.

Tarkong did not mention how detectives managed to identify Gioda as the suspect. ***(Ferdie De La Torre)***

Habitual offender who burglarized judge's house gets 6 years in prison

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Habitual offender Cling Philip Kaipat pleaded guilty on Tuesday to burglarizing the house of Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo in Dandan and for violating his probation. He was slapped with a six-year imprisonment sentence.

Kaipat pleaded guilty to burglary and theft as part of a plea deal. He also admitted to violating the terms and conditions of his probation in two previous criminal cases.

Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio sentenced Kaipat to 10 years in prison, all suspended except for five years, without the possibility of parole.

He was also directed to serve the remaining suspended sentence of one year for violating his probation.

Both sentences are to run consecutively. That means Kaipat shall serve a total of six years in prison. He was given credit for time served. He has been in custody since Nov. 5, 2015.

The six-year prison sentence, however, will run concurrently with the sentence in Kaipat's conviction in his case in federal court. That means he will serve the six years in prison within whatever prison term the federal court imposes on him.

After serving his sentence, Kaipat will be placed on supervised probation for five years. He was required to pay a $100 fine, plus court and probation fees.

Kaipat was required to undergo counseling at the Community Guidance Center.

He is not allowed to have any contact with Govendo and his wife, Domitilia Govendo, and shall stay 100 feet away from their home.

Kaipat was required to write a letter of apology and pay $839 in restitution to the Govendo couple.

He is prohibited from possessing or consuming any alcoholic beverages during his probation.

The $4,640 in restitution that Kaipat was ordered to pay his other victim, Joel Manalansan Enriquez, shall be converted to a civil judgment.

The Office of the Attorney General charged Kaipat with burglary, theft, and criminal mischief in February 2016.

In November 2016, the OAG revoked Kaipat's probation in two 2015 criminal cases.

Kaipat broke into Govendo's house in Dandan on Nov. 5, 2015, and stole a watch, a hunting knife, and $500.

Assistant attorney general Heather Barcinas appeared for the government. Assistant public defender Nancy Dominski served as counsel for Kaipat.

Earlier this month, Kaipat pleaded guilty in federal court for possession of a gun that he stole during the burglary at Govendo's house.

Kaipat, 21, pleaded guilty to count one of the indictment, which charges him with possession of a stolen firearm.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona set the sentencing for Feb. 23, 2018 at 9am.

Test shows Tinian cops are drug-free

All 25 police officers on Tinian yielded negative results during a department-wide drug test on Nov. 28, 2017.

According to Tinian Department of Public Safety resident director Mathew C. Masga, the test results also showed that no presumptive positives were found.

The test is a mandatory requirement under Public Law 18-47 for all law enforcement personnel.

The test was conducted with the CNMI Office of Personnel Management and the designated drug testing company who were brought down to Tinian to do the test.

Tinian Mayor Joey Patrick San Nicholas congratulated Masga for the results that showed that Tinian's police officers are drug-free. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

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*Must be 18 or older to be eligible to win. **New signup will automatically receive two entries according to desired service. Home Motion Bundle - (2) VIP entries | Wireless Plan - (2) General Admission entries Must be legally able to travel to Guam.Winners will be drawn and contacted on December 8, 2017. Terms and Conditions Apply. See stores for details.

OAG's Criminal Division gets a new lawyer

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A former prosecutor in Florida, American Samoa, and Palau has joined the Office of the Attorney General's Criminal Division.

Robert "Charlie" Lee took his oath as an assistant attorney general before CNMI Supreme Court Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro on Tuesday afternoon. The 39-year-old Lee will be handling appeals and violent crimes.

"I'm proud to be part of the team," he said.

Lee is no stranger to the islands. He served as an assistant attorney general for two years in American Samoa starting in mid-2009 and as an interim special prosecutor in Palau for a year in 2010. Lee arrived on Saipan last Oct. 26.

Assistant attorney general Robert "Charlie" Lee poses in a group photo with Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro, assistant attorney general Jonathan Wilberscheid, assistant attorney general Teri Tenorio, and Chief Prosecutor Michele Harris. Castro administered the oath at the CNMI Supreme Court on Tuesday afternoon.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

"I love Saipan. Saipan is great. It's a beautiful island," he said.

Lee obtained his bachelor's at the University of Central Florida. He went to law school at Samford University Cumberland School of Law in Birmingham, Alabama.

After being admitted to the Florida Bar in 2004, he started as a prosecutor at the Office of the State Attorney for the 10th Judicial Circuit of Florida in Bartow. He then went into private practice in 2008 in Florida and moved to American Samoa the following year to work as an assistant attorney general. After two years, he went back home and continued his practice of law.

Palau president Thomas Remengesau Jr. appointed Lee as special prosecutor in July 2014. After a year, he moved back to Florida.

The OAG's Criminal Division now has eight prosecutors.

Chief Prosecutor Michele Harris said they are really happy to have Lee joining their office.

"I'm really impressed with the amount of experience he brings to the office. We are looking forward to working with him and for welcoming him to the community," Harris said.

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

CNMI Scholarship Office makes a presentation on various scholarship opportunities with students at Grace Christian Academy as a part of an outreach for CNMI Scholarship Month.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Mount Carmel School students had the opportunity to have their questions about scholarships answered by the CNMI Scholarship Office during their CNMI Scholarship Month outreach presentation.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Students had the opportunity to meet CNMI Scholarship Office members and ask questions about receiving scholarship and financial assistance for college.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Students from Kagman High School learn more about the multiple scholarship and financial aid assistance provided by the CNMI Scholarship Office.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CNMI Scholarship Office compliance officer Mildred Camacho shares with students information about the compliance section of the office.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Lt.t Gov. Victor B. Hocog welcomes CNMI Scholarship Office employees to Rota, where the office hosted a scholarship outreach to the Rota community.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Results will be published on Saipan Tribune every Monday

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Bordallo statement on N. Korea ICBM launch

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Delegate Madeleine Z. Bordallo issued the following statement yesterday after North Korea launched an intercontinental ballistic missile. The missile traveled about 620 miles before splashing down in the Sea of Japan.

"While Guam remains safe, the recent missile launch by North Korea underscores the continued need for diplomatic engagement to diffuse tensions in the region. It is unacceptable that North Korea continues to make advancements to its illicit nuclear and ballistic missile programs, and I hope the Trump administration will work with the international community to peacefully resolve these threats. I remain confident in the DoD's capabilities to keep Guam and our allies in the region safe and protected." ***(PR)***

Public invited to participate in Rota Christmas tree decorating contest

By VA'INA LIZAMA
CORRESPONDENT

ROTA—The Department of Finance on Rota is sponsoring a Christmas tree decorating competition and is inviting everyone in the community and all public and private schools to participate.

The trees will be on display at the Sinapalo Children's Park and the contest's theme is "Spirit of Giving and Receiving."

Entry forms may be picked up at the Rota Department of Finance Administration Section. Deadline for submission of entry forms is on Dec. 20, by 4:30pm.

Judging will commence on Dec. 23,17 at 6:30pm. Each participating member of the community and public or private school must submit an entry form.

All Christmas trees should be at least 6 feet tall with Christmas lights.

Each participant will be given a number to place on the Christmas tree to identify it.

Judging will be based on the following criteria: natural materials only, creativity of design, overall display, uniqueness of the Christmas tree, and lighting.

Prizes are $250 for first place, $200 for second place, and $150 for third place.

For more information, contact Jackie Manglona or Erica Maratita at the Department of Finance at 532-3666/9488.

GCA EAGLES SOAR

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Grace Christian Academy's National Junior Speech & Debate Association and National Speech & Debate Association November winners have their picture taken at the school's Rev. Raymond S. Kinsella Library.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Grace Christian Academy Math Court November middle and high school winners have their picture taken.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Grace Christian Academy Thespian October winners have their picture taken at the school's chapel.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Grace Christian Academy's Primary Grades Forensic Conference November winners have their picture taken at the school's Rev. Raymond S. Kinsella Library.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Bank of Guam holiday schedule

■ Friday, Dec. 8: All Guam and CNMI branches of the Bank of Guam will be closed. The Customer Service Department will also be closed from 3pm to midnight.

■ Monday, Dec. 25: All branches will be closed. The Customer Service Department will be closed beginning Sunday, Dec. 24 at noon, all day Christmas Day, reopening after midnight on Dec. 26, 2017

■ Monday, Jan. 1, 2018: All branches will be closed. The Customer Service Department will be closed beginning Sunday, Dec. 31, at noon, all day New Year's Day, reopening after midnight on Jan. 2, 2018. ***(PR)***

Power interruption today

There will be a scheduled power interruption today, Nov. 30, 2017, from 9:30am to 10:30am to allow line crew of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. to replace deteriorated power pole hardware in Puerto Rico, near the Army Reserve.

Areas to be affected include Puerto Rico Industrial Dr., Petroleum Ln., Commercial Port Av., Harbor Ln. (Smiling Cove Marina, U.S. Army Reserve, Seaport, Shell Marianas, Mobil Oil Marianas, and Saipan Stevedore). The S-3 wastewater lift station will be affected but no water wells. ***(PR)***

Learn how to manage stress at today's SHRM meeting

The CNMI Chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management will feature two stress management experts—Wilma Villanueva and Christopher Cabrera of the Community Guidance Center's Wellness Center—at today's membership meeting at the Pacific Islands Club's Charley's Cabaret, from 11:30am to 1:30pm. The presentation includes the PIC lunch buffet at the cost of $20 for SHRM members and $30 for non-members. Seats are limited, so reserve your seat by contacting Penny Jones by email at penelope.jones@hyatt.com or Denise Montenegro at denise.montenegro@hyatt.com or by telephone at 323-5867/68. ***(PR)***

Personalized Christmas ornaments for sale in fundraiser

Team KOKA presents the second year of its Tree of Angels project. Personalized Christmas ornaments are being sold for $5 in memory of beloved ones. The ornaments will be displayed on Christmas trees beginning Dec. 10 at the San Jose Church. If interested in helping with this fundraiser, feel free to buy from any of the Team KOKA members or contact teamkokacnmi@gmail.com or Frances Diaz at 433-3800. ***(PR)***

'Glow, Walk, Run, or Wheel' on Tinian

The VOICES of the CNMI-Tinian Chapter presents its annual "Glow, Walk, Run, or Wheel" on Saturday, Dec. 9, starting at 5:30pm at the Tinian Teen Center. This will be the fourth year for the VOICES signature event.

Registration is $10 per participant and each participant will receive a signature T-shirt designed by The Undeniable and a raffle ticket.

Raffle tickets will be sold at $1 each during the event or can be purchased early from any of the team members. For information, contact Jan Barcinas at 433-3826 or Monika Diaz at 433-3800 or email monikahdiaz@gmail. ***(PR)***

Innovation summit on Dec. 5

The Commonwealth Development Authority and the CNMI Department of Commerce are hosting an Innovation Summit on Dec. 5 at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan's Hibiscus Hall, from 9am to 2pm, featuring John McElligott and David Rixter. This summit is workforce development related, augmented with new technology that is now developing rapidly. It is free.

There will also be a small gathering on Dec. 4, 2017, at the American Memorial Park Indoor Theatre from 5pm to 8pm, during which McElligott will be making a presentation to potential stakeholders as well as to any other interested individuals.

Members of the community, both public and private, are encouraged to participate. ***(PR)***

SCC meeting on Dec. 6

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce will have a general membership meeting on Wednesday, Dec. 6, at Saipan World Resort. Marian Aldan Pierce, co-chair of the Strategic Economic Development Council, and board member of the Northern Marianas Business Alliance Corp., will speak about the CW issue. Nicole Babauta, director of the Small Business Development Council, will speak about entrepreneurship and the services that the organization can provide.

Students will be joining the meeting with the member businesses that are hosting them for this year's Career Exploration Day. Contact Chamber executive director Jill M. Arenovski at 234-7150 or fax 234-7151 to reserve your seat. ***(PR)***

Birthday reception for Japan emperor

Japan Consul Kinji Shinoda will host a reception in honor of the birthday of the Emperor of Japan at the Fiesta Hall of the Grandvrio Resort on Tuesday, Dec. 5, from 6pm to 7:30pm. Around 150 invited guests from the CNMI government, Legislature, mayors' offices, business circles, the Japanese community and others are expected to join the reception. Emperor Akihito will become 84 years old on Dec. 23, and his birthday is celebrated as a national holiday in Japan. Akihito and Empress Michiko visited Saipan on June 27 and 28, 2005.

MIFICPA to host Excel workshop

The Marianas Institute of Filipino CPAs and Accountants, is inviting all members to this year's workshop on advanced Microsoft Excel. The workshop will be on Dec. 2, 2017, a Saturday, from 8:30am to 12pm, at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe. Registration starts at 8am.

There will be a $5 fee to cover incidentals. Non-members are welcome for a $15 seminar fee. Seats are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Most importantly, please bring your own laptop.

For reservation and more details, check the MIFICPA Facebook page or call or email any of the officers: Angie Mamaril at 783-1857 (angiehmamaril@yahoo.com); Lois Manese at 286-8663 (eloisa_manese@yahoo.com); Cris Bucalig at 287-0945 (cris_bong@yahoo.com) or Gloria Balila at 989-6284 (mgmbalila@yahoo.com). ***(PR)***

Power interruption on Dec. 2

There will be a scheduled power interruption on Saturday, Dec. 2, 2017, from 5:30am to 10:30am to allow line crew of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. to safely replace three wooden power poles with concrete poles along Chalan Tun Thomas P. Sablan in San Antonio. Areas to be affected include Kiya 2 (2nd partial), which covers San Antonio Chalan Tun Thomas P. Sablan (Batto Pl., Bunita Pl., Aluda Pl., and Asuli Pl.). No water well will be affected. Sewer lift stations that will be affected are: A-1, A-2, & A-16. ***(CUC)***

Water service outage in Dandan

There will be a scheduled water service interruption in Dandan today,Nov. 30, 2017, from 1pm to 5pm. AIC Marianas Inc. will be replacing a 6-inch water gate valve. For more information, contact the CUC Customer Call Center (664-4282) or monitor the CUC Facebook page for the latest updates (https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporationl). ***(CUC)***

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
Phone: (670) 237-6500 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cpa.gov.mp

INVITATION FOR BID
PROJECT NO.: CPA-RA-001-17

BTMIA AIRLINE OFFICE RENOVATION (FORMERLY FREEDOM AIR)
BENJAMIN TAISACAN MANGLONA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, ROTA

Notice is hereby given that the Commonwealth Ports Authority (the "CPA") is accepting sealed bids, subject to the terms and conditions of this Invitation for Bid (the "IFB"), and other contract provisions, for bids from firms, companies and/or corporations for office renovations to the former Freedom Air Lease space at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport, Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Bid Package is available for pick-up beginning November 06, 2017 from 0800 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Accounting Office, 2nd Floor, Departure Building, Saipan International Airport upon payment of Fifty Dollars ($50.00). The Bid Package includes layouts and project specification. Bidders must submit all required documents listed in the bid package. All responses to this IFB shall also take into account any and/or all costs that will be charged to the bidder awarded the contract for the project. Bidders shall also take into consideration all necessary badging requirements and fees for this project if so required.

Questions and/or clarification concerning this project shall be in writing and sent to the attention of the Executive Director through email at cpa.receptionist@pticom.com with copy to Fermin Flores at ferminf@cpa.gov.mp no later than November 23, 2017.

All bids shall be sealed and marked on the cover package outside as follows: **"BTMIA AIRLINE OFFICE RENOVATION, ROTA AIRPORT (Formerly Freedom Air) CPA-RA-001-17."** One (1) original and three (3) copies of the bid must be submitted no later than **2 p.m. LOCAL TIME, November 30, 2017**, to the Office of the Executive Director, 2nd Floor, Arrival Building, Saipan International Airport.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so, would be in CPA's best interest. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said bids if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest. All bids shall become property of the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Date

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055, SAIPAN MP 96950-1055
Phone: (670) 237-6500/1 • Fax (670) 234-5962
E-mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cpa.gov.mp

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

INSTALLATION OF MARINE FENDERS
PORT OF SAIPAN
PROJECT NO. CPA-RFP-007-18

Notice is hereby given that the Commonwealth Ports Authority (the "CPA") is accepting sealed proposals, subject to the terms and conditions of this Request for Proposals (the "RFP") and other contract provisions, for awarding a contract to supply and install marine fenders at the Port of Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. This RFP is issued pursuant to Chapter 40-50, Procurement Rules and Regulations of Title 40 of the Northern Mariana Islands Administrative Code (the "NMIAC"). Title 40, including Chapter 40-50-225, Request for proposals, of the NMIAC is applicable to the process followed by this RFP.

The proposal package containing the Scope of Work and other considerations will be available for pick up beginning November 30, 2017, at the Office of the Executive Director, 2nd Floor, Arrival Building, Saipan International Airport.

Proposals will be received at the Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, 2nd Floor-Arrivals Building, Saipan International Airport no later than 2:00 P.M. LOCAL TIME, December 22, 2017. Proposals received after the date/time indicated above will not be opened and will be returned to the Proposer.

Each proposal shall be accompanied by a proposal (bid) bond issued by a U.S. Treasury Listed surety company, a certified check, or a cashier's check in the amount no less than ten percent (10%) of the total proposal amount. Checks shall be made payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

CPA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted for: (a) any of the reasons set forth in this Request for Proposals; or (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding bid rejection or cancellation; or (c) sufficient justification exists that awarding the project contract would not be in the best interest of CPA. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said proposals if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest.

All proposals shall become property of the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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How vinyl fills a generation's need for human interaction

By TEDDY CRIMMINS
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

The record player and the Polaroid camera, both antiquated technology, are making a comeback within my younger generation. These modernly useless machines have been embraced by "hipsters" and have assumed their own spot in a sort of new counterculture.

But what makes people willing to pay for such impractical things?

I have the most experience with the record player, having asked for one a couple of years ago for my 16th birthday. At first, my parents didn't understand why I would want this bulky machine that would take up place in their basement. Why would I want to spend my money on the giant pieces of plastic they would have to find somewhere to store when I could have a nearly infinite music library on my computer through Spotify?

To answer this question I need to describe my first experience in a record store.

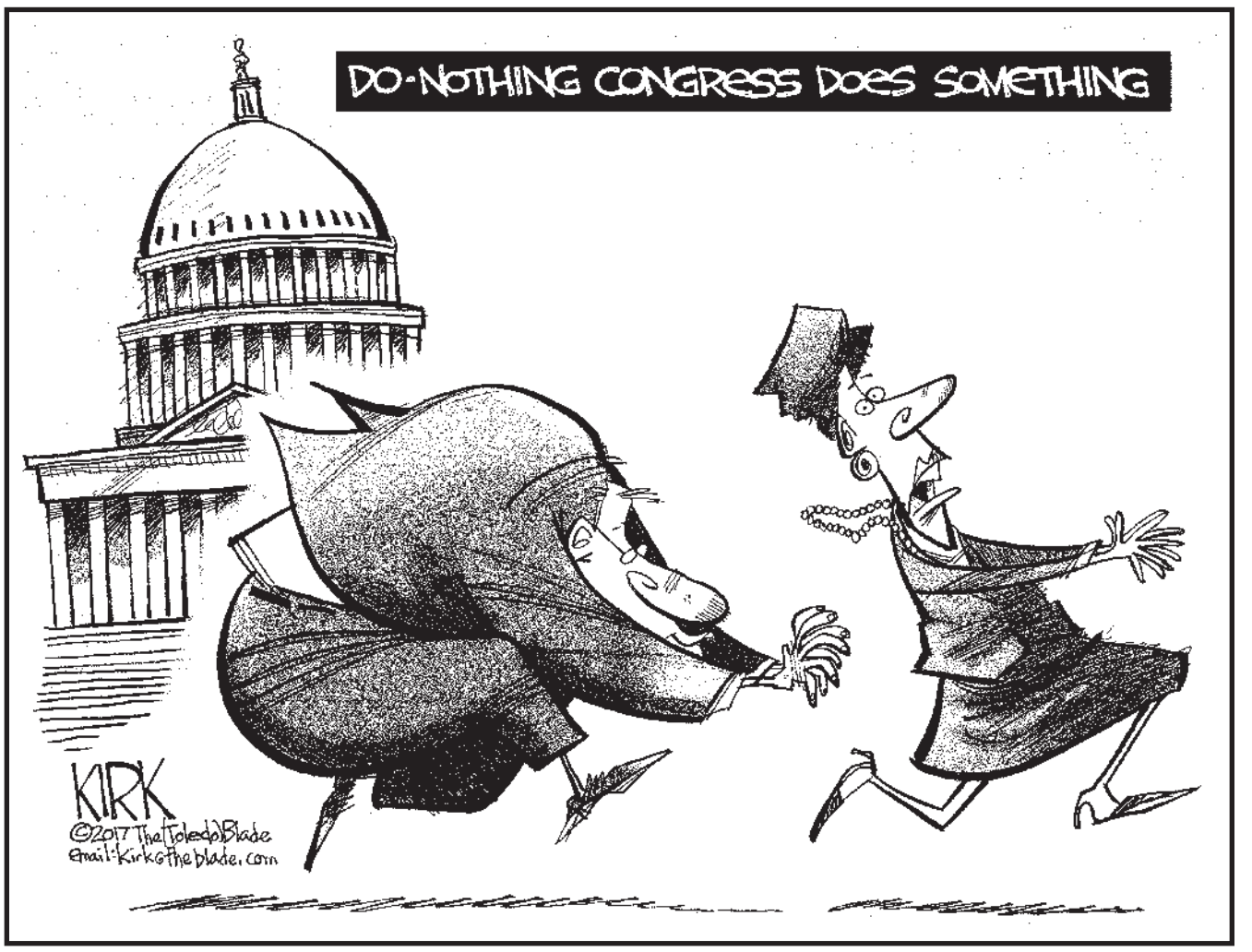
Automation and technology are improving efficiency by cutting out the personal and the friendly–and along the way leaving a generation starved for interaction. MARCEL DE GRIJS/DREAMSTIME/TNS

It was a hot summer day when my friend Zack and I walked down the streets of Evanston, Ill., to Vintage Vinyl on Davis Street. The cold metal door to the musty room creaked as I pulled hard to open it. In front of me lay a voluminous quantity of wooden crates packed with cardboard squares organized alphabetically. I walked down the aisles running my hand over the sanded wood, stopping to sort through the giant colored albums.

It was strange to see album artwork so large and to handle it physically. My heart leapt when I flipped through a crate and found a copy of Van Morrison's "Moondance." I grabbed the record, holding it firmly and wanting to ensure that it could really be mine.

Zack and I walked to the counter where a longhaired man peered over at us. The man was surprised that a 16-year-old would want to buy a Van Morrison record. He asked me if I knew about Morrison's earlier work in his band Them. I did not. I walked home clutching the brown paper bag with my new re-

See VINYL on Next Page



Is Mnuchin a fool or a knave?

By ROBERT B. REICH
Tribune News Service

Former U.S. Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich is a professor of public policy at the University of California at Berkeley and the author of Aftershock: The Next Economy and America's Future. *He blogs at www.robertreich.org.*

One of the most dangerous consequences of this awful period in American life is the denigration of the truth, and of the institutions and people who tell it.

There are two kinds of liars—fools and knaves. Fools lie because they don't know the truth. Knaves lie because they intend to mislead.

Donald Trump is both, because he doesn't even care enough about the truth to find out what it is. He'll say whatever he thinks will get people to believe what he wants them to believe.

What about people like Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin, Trump's point person on the Republican tax bills now making their way through Congress?

Mnuchin continues to insist that the legislation puts a higher tax burden on people earning more than $1 million a year, and reduces taxes on everyone else. "I can tell you that virtually everybody in the middle class will get a tax cut, and will get a significant tax cut," Mnuchin said on the Fox News Channel.

But the prestigious Tax Policy Center concludes that by 2027, almost all of the benefits of both bills will have gone to the richest 1 percent, while upper-middle-class payers will pay higher taxes and those at the lower levels will receive only modest benefits.

So is Mnuchin a fool? His career before he became treasury secretary doesn't suggest so. He graduated from Yale and worked for 17 years for investment bank Goldman Sachs.

Perhaps Mnuchin doesn't find the Tax Policy Center credible. Maybe he agrees with Trump economic adviser Peter Navarro, who describes it as "a left-leaning center that produces analyses that favor Democratic tax-and-spend programs and disfavor Republican programs."

In the age of Trump, even prestigious organizations once considered nonpartisan are either "with us" or "against us."

Problem is, virtually all other studies by every other source show the House and Senate tax bills overwhelmingly benefit the rich and, within a few years, harm the middle class.

Even the Joint Committee on Taxation, the House and Senate's official scorekeeper on tax issues, finds that the Senate's version of the bill would increase taxes on all income groups making under $75,000 per year.

By 2027, it would give its biggest tax breaks to those making $1 million or more. The House bill would be even more generous to millionaires and billionaires.

Mnuchin's response? He has none. He just keeps repeating the same lie.

Mnuchin also maintains that the Senate and House tax plans won't cause the federal deficit to rise. "This isn't about the deficit," he said recently. "We'll create economic growth to pay down the deficit."

But even the Tax Foundation—a major proponent of the corporate tax cuts—estimates the House bill will cause a $1.08 trillion revenue loss over 10 years, and the Senate bill a $516 billion loss.

Assuming Mnuchin isn't a fool, he's a knave. He intends to deceive the public.

By doing so he has abandoned his duty to the American people inherent in the oath of office taken by every Cabinet official, in favor of advancing the goals of his boss and other Republicans in Washington who are desperate to pass their tax bill.

He has also sacrificed his credibility and integrity.

Why? Because he's secretary of the treasury in an administration that has no integrity. Merely by joining Trump, he made a Faustian bargain and lost whatever integrity he might have had.

Recall that after Trump equated white supremacists with protesters in Charlottesville, and several hundred of Mnuchin's Yale classmates urged him to resign in protest, Mnuchin found it "hard to believe I should have to defend myself on this, or the president."

After Trump demanded that NFL owners deal harshly with black athletes protesting police brutality, Mnuchin said the athletes should "do free speech on their own time. This is about respect for the military and first responders in the country."

Apparently Mnuchin will say anything to retain his power and influence in the Trump administration. He knows he'll never have anything close to this power again.

Mnuchin probably figures so what if he lies about the true consequences of the tax bills? Trump lies about them, too. So do Speaker of the House Paul Ryan and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

Mnuchin probably assumes most of the public will never know he lied. Even those who know will soon forget. In this era of Trumpian big lies, there are no consequences for lying.

But history may not be kind to Steve Mnuchin.

Over the last century, authoritarian and fascist regimes have intentionally and systematically denigrated the truth.

The knaves who helped them are remembered in ignominy.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

What now with this lethal North Korean mess?

By ANDREW MALCOLM
Special to McClatchy

Andrew Malcolm is an author and veteran national and foreign correspondent covering politics since the 1960s. Follow him @ AHMalcolm.

Economic sanctions on misbehaving nations such as North Korea haven't worked. So, perhaps more of them will.

That's pretty much where the Trump administration and its Asian allies are right now as they continue a decades-long international effort to halt that recalcitrant rogue regime's rapidly-advancing nuclear weapons development program.

In recent years, sanctions against countries, individuals and companies have become the go-to political ploy for Western nations needing another press release to appear to show they're really doing something to rein in another country. President Donald Trump laid more of them on Pyongyang the other day. The toughest ever, he said, while strengthening U.S. military forces in the area.

Trump also finally restored North Korea to the list of nations officially sponsoring terrorism. A list it never should have left in 2008 by the hands of George W. Bush.

Here's the problem: Asian nations, friend and foe alike, have been around for millennia. They know U.S. administrations _ and their policies _ come and go in a few years. So they ignore threats, nod politely or simply wait out the tough talk. Back in the mid-'70's Jimmy Carter was alarmed by growing trade deficits with Japan. He waged word wars against Tokyo trade policies. It didn't work.

Now, it's Trump's turn.

Sanctions are supposed to inflict such economic pain on their targets that the misbehaving nation and its leaders change course to make them stop. President Barack Obama slapped sanctions on Russia and Putin aides in 2014 over the annexation of Crimea and inciting Ukrainian insurrection.

Obama claimed the restrictions hurt Russia's economy and ruble. True, they did. Trouble is, that wasn't the goal. The goal was to change Putin's policies. And that's totally failed. Same for Obama sanctions on Syria and its dictator Bashar al-Assad, which even included freezing his British-born wife's credit cards. Assad used poison gas on Syrians at least twice this year.

Now, Trump officials say sanctions are hurting North Korea's economy. The result? North Korea has launched 10 percent more missile tests this year so far.

But wait! Maybe the sanctions aren't the problem. Maybe the problem is actually inconsistent Western policy patterns toward the North. Policies that appear to Western eyes to punish and look tough in its media but actually over time tacitly acquiesce to the North's recalcitrance and incremental drive to acquire a nuclear arsenal.

In 1988, Pyongyang was labeled a state sponsor of terror for downing a South Korean airliner killing 115 and assassinating Seoul diplomats in Burma.

Does 1988 sound familiar? Twenty-nine years ago last week a Libyan bomb downed Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing 243. Longtime strongman Muammar Gadaffi later paid compensation to families and, in return for Western promises of forgiveness, also relinquished his flourishing nuclear weapons program.

Gadaffi's reward? Obama joined European forces to overthrow the Libyan leader in October 2011. A mob tore him apart.

Nine weeks later, another coincidence. Kim Jung-un became North Korea's dictator. Think maybe he noticed Western duplicity?

Under a succession of ruthless Kims since the early '90's the impoverished North agreed to rein in its weapons programs in return for economic goodies like foods and a winter's-worth of heating oil.

Under a succession of hopeful and painfully patient U.S. presidents unwilling to display a credible threat of force, the North's program has continued to progress to such a point that Washington intelligence officials now estimate Kim's nuclear missiles could reach the U.S. mainland as early as next year.

Inevitably, the Communist regime was caught serial cheating, lured back to the table with further concessions, then renewed its cheating. It's exported missiles and rockets to Iran. Kim's regime has kidnapped Japanese, abducted Americans and bombarded South Korean islands and boats.

In February using a banned nerve agent, Kim agents in Malaysia assassinated his exiled elder brother, rumored as a possible puppet replacement if the current Kim was ousted.

In 2007, the North helped Syria build a nuclear reactor for weapons development. The U.S. declined to do anything. Israel bombed it into rubble.

Just nine months later President Bush erased the North off the terror list, vainly hoping once more to encourage change. "If North Korea continues to make the right choices," Bush said, "it can repair its relationship with the international community."Continues?

While appealing to China for stricter sanctions help, Trump has said he will not allow this country to become a hostage to Kim's nuclear threats. The dictatorship, he said, must stop supporting international terrorism and "end its unlawful nuclear and ballistic missile development."

Months away from the North's calculated capability to hit the U.S. mainland, three American carrier strike groups, including nuclear subs, now cruise the Western Pacific with allies, a rare occurrence certainly representing a credible force.

While saying he much prefers a diplomatic solution, the American commander-in-chief has stressed an end to a quarter-century's worth of ineffective "strategic patience," meaning U.S. administrations have finally run out of street to kick the North Korean can down.

LITERARY NOOK

The Second *Year* Coming

With due respect for W.B. Yeats poem The Second Coming

By JOEY 'PEPE BATBON' CONNOLLY
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

tweeting and retweeting in a semantic cyber whirlpool
a bling king thing digresses and falls into his own dumpster
Things Fall Apart is removed from the WH bookshelf
mediocrity personified is loosed upon the wide world
the flight of ideas is at low tide and everywhere
the ceremony of the national anthem is challenged
many from top to bottom base staff face conviction
while the worst are full of denial believe me believe it
surely some realization of these matters is close at hand
just as sure as twaddling twit results in loss of command
a special counselor brings comeuppance news hardly out as
a copy of 'Adam Smith For Dummies' philosophy appears
a yellowing blank page gaze with little empathy for all
is moving with rage across campaign stage after stage
spouting demagoguery and rant while all about him
his team of legal sharks and Wall Street beasts feast
concerned twenty first century citizens grow paranoid
awakening every day to a new narcissistic nightmare
as the golden boy golfing goofball veers off course
headed back to his WH dump or his own white tower

the She Said She Said She Said Credible Waltz

we have all heard the 'he said' 'she said' argument story
we've heard the 'he did' 'but then he said' response the same
now 'she said she said' reports sexual assault in details gory
used in arguments back and forth in the name blame game
however now there seems to be a popular national chant
coming out everyday on TV and in social media for sure
as 'she said she said she said' becomes a common rant
about political and celebrity figures including Roy Moore
remember President Bill Clinton was impeached almost
accused fired, apologized, resigned, some gave up their fight
sexual assault reported on entertainers from coast to coast
as 'she said' numbers increase morning, noon, and night
meanwhile 45 and others accused keep repeating 'false!'
continuing the 'she said she said she said' credible waltz.

Creation Event to Collusion Event

The effect of gamma (KGB) rays on a positron (political partisan) and electron (election) paths

In the microscopic subatomic world of particle physics
there's something called a creation event
that is when the coiled world of a positrons path
meets the coiled world of an electrons path
physicists do the math and see something then clicks
and that is what is called a creation event
in the macroscopic world of American politics
there is something I call a collusion event
when a partisan paid Russian ruble rich path
meets the coiled world of a political opponents path
Byzantine money talks to the media but to no one sticks
under the articles of the constitution tent
in the murky world and cyber time of partisan creation
lies an illusional, confusional, collusional event.

VINYL

From Page 10

cord, gleeful, and with a new music recommendation too.

Zack and I had spent a day together searching for records. We had made it into an event—driving to the store, getting food, walking around outside. In the process I had become closer to a friend, talked to someone new about something I'm passionate about, actually gotten out of my house and into the sunlight and learned something about the past.

In today's world, a lot of this would be considered a waste of time. I could have avoided all of this "trouble" had I spent 10 seconds taking my phone out of my pocket, typing in the name of the album and pressing play.

I'm not writing this to try to get people to start collecting records, or to tell anyone to listen to Van Morrison. I'm trying to explain why some members of a younger generation are clinging to relics of the past.

The difference between my experience in the record store and the experience of opening an app on my phone is the presence of human interaction.

Day-to-day life can seem interaction-starved. Walk down a crowded high school hallway and you'll see faces angled downward at glowing screens. Our wired devices make it more efficient to communicate without ever actually talking to the people on the other end. Even learning can lack a human touch now with the "flipped classroom," an idea pioneered by Kahn Academy that involves students learning outside of class by watching videos of teachers explaining things.

Those older gadgets—the record player and the Polaroid camera—force human interaction. Somebody needs to be present with you to view a physical Polaroid picture; you can't simply send it to them electronically.

My generation's obsession with the antiquated is a veiled longing for the warmth of human interaction in a world becoming colder and colder every day—a world where I can walk into a restaurant and order my meal on a touch screen without having to look another human in the eyes.

Automation and technology are improving efficiency by cutting out the personal and the friendly—and along the way leaving a generation starved for interaction.

Teddy Crimmins of Winnetka, Ill., is a sophomore studying chemistry at Colorado College. He wrote this for the Chicago Tribune.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY
Partly sunny in the morning then becoming partly cloudy. Isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.
▲88° ▼78°

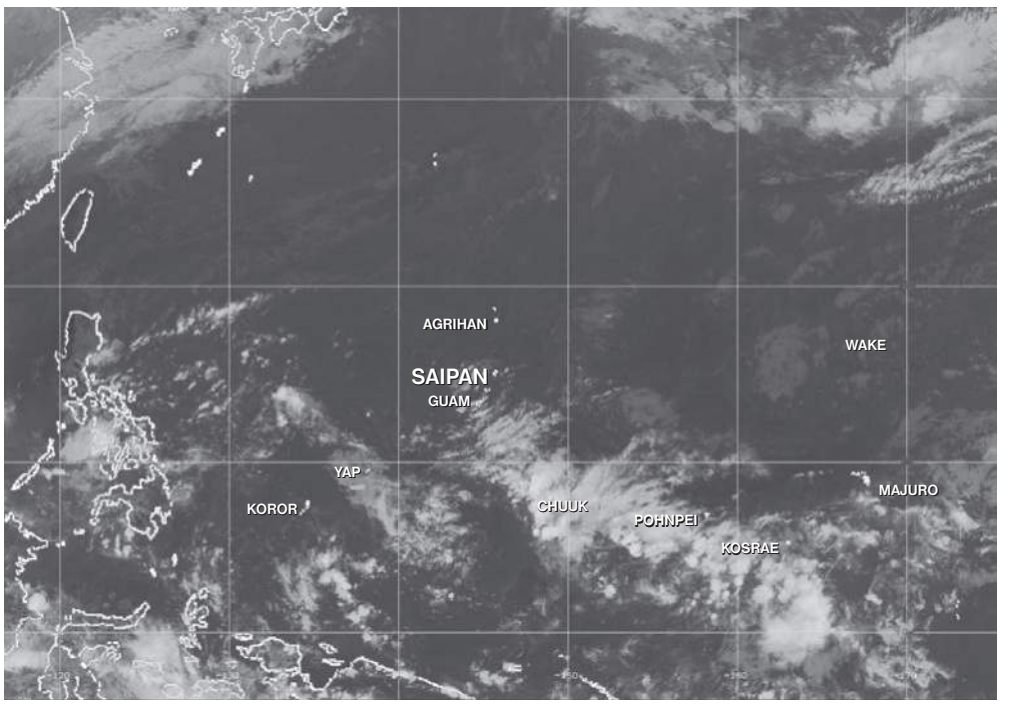
FRIDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.
▲88° ▼78°

SATURDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼78°

SUNDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼78°

MONDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼78°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:00 AM, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2017
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Latest satellite imagery showed scattered clouds with isolated showers and thunderstorms around the Marianas early this morning associated with an upper low to the northeast. Combined seas were generally around 6 feet at the buoys.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Palau	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Yap	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	85° / 77°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	85° / 77°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	87° / 81°

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Showers	72° / 61°
Beijing	Sunny	41° / 19°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	73° / 61°
Honolulu	Showers	83° / 73°
London	Mostly Sunny	39° / 36°
Los Angeles	Sunny	78° / 55°
Manila	Thunderstorms	90° / 77°
Melbourne	Thunderstorms	79° / 57°
Miami	Showers	80° / 72°
New York	Cloudy	50° / 46°
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	55° / 41°
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	41° / 34°
Busan	Sunny	46° / 32°
Rome	Showers	55° / 37°
Salem	Partly Cloudy	70° / 54°
San Francisco	Sunny	61° / 48°
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	37° / 21°
Tokyo	Cloudy	46° / 37°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	51° / 45°

NMI CRIME STOPPERS
Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
4:44 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.52
10:25 AM	LOW TIDE	0.63
4:40 PM	HIGH TIDE	2.02
11:35 PM	LOW TIDE	0.15

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:26 AM	5:44 PM
Friday	6:27 AM	5:44 PM
Saturday	6:27 AM	5:44 PM
Sunday	6:28 AM	5:45 PM
Monday	6:28 AM	5:45 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	2:39 am	2:59 pm
Friday	-	3:35 am	3:46 pm
Saturday	-	4:34 am	4:36 pm
Sunday	-	5:36 am	5:31 pm
Monday	-	6:41 am	6:30 pm

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 6, 2017

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA6394	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA6392	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA6391	1:30pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota
UA6390	2:20pm	3:10pm	2, 3, 6
UA6398	6:05pm	6:55pm	Daily
UA6396	9:50pm	10:40pm	Daily

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA6391	1:30pm	2:05pm	1, 4, 5, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA6391	2:35pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL297	4:15pm	7:05pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3451	3:10am	6:10am	1, 7
7C3451	4:00am	7:05am	4, 5

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

TW308	2:00am	6:05am	2, 3, 4
OZ626	2:10am	6:00am	1
TW308	2:35am	6:20am	6, 7
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
7C3403	4:45am	8:30am	Daily
LJ652	3:40am	7:30am	1, 4, 5, 7
7C3401	4:00pm	7:45pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:30am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-HANGZHOU (HGH)

JD396	7:00am	10:25am	1
JD396	4:50pm	8:15pm	4

SAIPAN-NANJING (NKG)

XP889	4:45pm	10:30pm	3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	6:35am	3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/701	2:10am	10:55am	1 via ICN
OZ626/701	2:50am	10:55am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA6394/191	4:15am	9:00am	2, 3, 6, 7 via GUM
UA6394/PR111	4:15am	8:10am	7 via GUM
UA6394/PR111	4:15am	9:20am	1, 3, 4, 6 via GUM
UA6398/183	6:05pm	9:40pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA6398/183	6:05pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA6398/193	6:05pm	11:50pm	2, 5 via GUM-ROR

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

HX077	2:00am	5:00am	1, 4
OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UO43	5:45am	8:40am	1, 3, 5, 7
UA6398/159	6:05pm	11:00pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA6393	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA6395	7:15am	8:05am	Daily
UA6391	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA6390	12:10pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6 via Rota
UA6397	4:45pm	5:35pm	Daily
UA6399	8:30pm	9:20pm	Daily

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA6390	12:10pm	12:45pm	2, 3, 6

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA6390	1:15pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:30am	3:00pm	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3452	9:00pm	2:10am+1	4
7C3452	9:05pm	2:10am+1	3, 6, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3402	9:30am	3:00pm	Daily
TW307	7:45pm	1:00am+1	1, 2, 3
OZ625	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
TW307	8:05pm	1:35am+1	5, 6
OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
LJ651	9:10pm	2:40am+1	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3404	10:10pm	3:40am+1	Daily

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:20pm	4:30am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

HANGZHOU (HGH)-SAIPAN

JD395	8:10am	3:30pm	4
JD395	10:05pm	5:30am+1	7

NANJING (NKG)-SAIPAN

XP888	9:35pm	4:00am+1	1, 4, 6

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:25pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA182/6395	12:40am	8:05am	3, 6 via GUM
UA190/6397	9:55am	5:35pm	2, 3, 6, 7 via GUM
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/UA6395	10:05pm	8:05am+1	2, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA192/6395	10:30pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via ROR-GUM
UA184/6395	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
HX076	5:20pm	12:30am+1	3, 7
UO42	6:50pm	1:45am+1	7
UO42	9:30pm	4:25am+1	2, 4, 6
UA116/6395	11:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U Sichuan Airlines, 7C Jeju Air, DL Delta Airlines, JD Beijing Capital, UO HK Express, HX HongKong Airlines, LJ Jin Air, MU China Eastern, OZ Asiana Airlines, TW t'way Air, UA United Airlines, PR PAL Express, XP XTRA Airways; ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The* Saipan Tribune *is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	7:30AM	8:00AM	Daily
1302	11:30AM	12:00PM	Daily
1303	4:00PM	4:30PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	8:15AM	8:45AM	Daily
3102	1:45PM	2:15PM	Daily
3103	4:45PM	5:15PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15PM	12:45PM	Daily

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	1:00PM	1:30PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
1202	8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
1203	9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
1204	10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
1205	11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
1206	12:00PM	12:15PM	Daily
1207	1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
1208	2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
1209	3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
1210	4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
1211	5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
1212	6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2102	7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
2103	8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
2104	9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
2105	10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
2106	11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
2107	12:30PM	12:45PM	Daily
2108	1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2109	2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
2110	3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
2111	4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
2112	5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
2113	6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

Business

GOP shoves tax overhaul ahead

WASHINGTON (AP)—Republicans held together and shoved their signature tax overhaul a crucial step ahead Tuesday as wavering GOP senators showed a growing openness. But its fate remained uncertain, and a planned White House summit aimed at averting a government shutdown was derailed when President Donald Trump savaged top Democrats and declared on Twitter, "I don't see a deal!"

» Shutdown still a threat

"It's time to stop tweeting and start leading," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer retorted after he and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi rebuffed the budget meeting with Trump and top Republicans.

Trump lunched with GOP senators at the Capitol and declared it a "love fest," as he had his previous closed-doors visit. But the day underscored the party's yearlong problem of unifying behind key legislation—even a bill slashing corporate taxes and cutting personal taxes that's a paramount party goal.

Tuesday's developments also emphasized the leverage Democrats have as Congress faces a deadline a week from Friday for passing legislation to keep federal agencies open while leaders seek a longer-term budget deal. Republicans lack the votes to pass the short-term legislation without Democratic support.

In a party-line 12-11 vote, the Senate Budget Committee managed to advance the tax measure to the full Senate as a pair of wavering Republicans—Wisconsin's Ron Johnson and Tennessee's Bob Corker—fell into line, at least for the moment. In more good news for the GOP, moderate Sen. Susan Collins of Maine said it was a "fair assumption" that she was likelier to support the bill after saying Trump agreed to make property taxes up to $10,000 deductible instead of eliminating that break entirely.

But the fate of the legislation remained uncertain as it headed toward debate by the full Senate, which Republicans control by a slender 52-48. GOP leaders can afford just two defectors, and a half dozen or more in their party have been uncommitted. They include some wanting bigger tax breaks for many businesses but others cringing over the $1.4 trillion—or more—that the measure is projected to add to budget deficits over the next decade.

"It's a challenging exercise," conceded Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky. He compared it to "sitting there with a Rubik's Cube and trying to get to 50" votes, a tie that Vice President Mike Pence would break.

Corker, who's all but broken with Trump over the president's behavior in office, is among a handful of Republicans uneasy over the mountains of red ink the tax measure is expected to produce. He said he was encouraged by discussions with the White House and party leaders to include a mechanism—details still unknown—to automatically trigger tax increases if specified, annual economic growth targets aren't met.

"I think we're getting to a very good place on the deficit issue," Corker said.

But other Republicans are wary of backing legislation that would hold the hammer of potential future tax increases over voters' heads.

"I am not going to vote to automatically implement tax increases on the American people. If I do that, consider me drunk," said Sen. John Kennedy of Louisiana.

Collins said she'd also won agreement that before completing the tax measure, Congress would approve legislation restoring federal payments to health insurers that Trump scuttled last month. That bill has had bipartisan support, but it's unclear if Democrats would back it amid partisan battling over the tax bill.

McConnell and House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., met with Trump at the White House despite the top Democrats' no-shows. Trump highlighted their absence by appearing before reporters flanked by two empty chairs bearing Schumer's and Pelosi's names.

Trump said Democrats would be to blame for any shutdown, despite GOP domination of government.

'Hacker-for-hire' pleads guilty to Yahoo breach

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—A Canadian man pleaded guilty Tuesday to charges stemming from a massive breach at Yahoo that authorities say was directed by two Russian intelligence agents and affected at least a half billion user accounts.

Karim Baratov appeared in a jail jumpsuit before a federal judge and entered the pleas to one count of conspiracy to commit computer fraud and abuse and eight counts of aggravated identity theft. He gave "yes" and "no" answers to questions from the judge about his pleas but said nothing more.

He is scheduled for sentencing on Feb. 20.

U.S. law enforcement officials call the 22-year-old Baratov a "hacker-for-hire" and say as part of his plea deal, he acknowledged hacking more than 11,000 webmail accounts on behalf of the Russian Federal Security Service, or FSB, and other customers from around 2010 until his March arrest.

Outside court Tuesday, Baratov's attorneys said their client hacked only eight accounts for the Russians and did not know that he was working for Russian agents connected to the Yahoo breach. Baratov was arrested in Hamilton, Ontario, and later agreed to forego an extradition hearing and face the U.S. charges.

"He's been transparent and forthright with the government since he got here," said one of his attorneys, Andrew Mancilla.

The Russian agents, Dmitry Dokuchaev and Igor Sushchin, used the information they stole from Yahoo to spy on Russian journalists, U.S. and Russian government officials and employees of financial services and other private businesses, according to prosecutors.

Dokuchaev, Sushchin and a third Russian national, Alexsey Belan, were also named in the indictment filed in February, though it's not clear whether they will ever set foot in an American courtroom since there's no extradition treaty with Russia.

Though the U.S. government had previously charged individual Russian hackers with cybercrime—as well as hackers directly linked to the Chinese and Iranian governments—this was the first criminal case to name as defendants sitting members of the FSB for hacking charges, the Justice Department said.

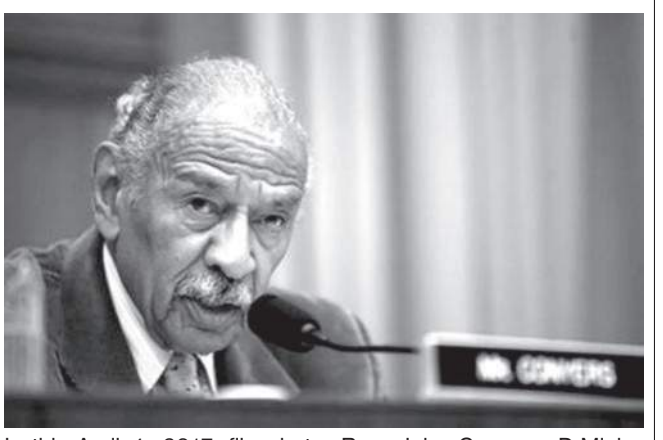
Yahoo user accounts began being compromised at least as early as 2014.

Dokuchaev and Sushchin turned to Baratov after learning that one of their targets had accounts at webmail providers other than Yahoo, prosecutors said.

Nation

More pressure on Conyers to resign after new accusations

WASHINGTON (AP)—Calls for Michigan Rep. John Conyers to resign increased on Tuesday after a former staffer said the longest-serving member of the House made unwanted sexual advances that included partially undressing in front of her in a hotel room and inappropriate touching.



In this April 4, 2017, file photo, Rep. John Conyers, D-Mich., speaks during a hearing of the House Judiciary subcommittee on Capitol Hill in Washington. AP

Deanna Maher, 77, who ran a Michigan office for Conyers from 1997 to 2005, told The Associated Press Tuesday that the first incident occurred in 1997 during a three-day Congressional Black Caucus event in Washington, which she said she "felt honored" to attend.

Maher said while she was in the bedroom of a hotel suite, Conyers walked in, called room service and ordered sandwiches.

"I had my nightclothes on," said Maher, who now lives in the Holland area in western Michigan. "I was just scared to death. I was married at the time. He sat in the bedroom taking his clothes off. I didn't say anything and he didn't say anything."

Nothing happened between them, she added.

"He didn't go naked. He was down to his skivvies," Maher said. "He sat there eating sandwiches and then he stormed out and slammed the door. I was so embarrassed and ashamed of myself for being so stupid. I needed a job."

"He didn't put his hand on me, but the message was loud and clear," she said.

The latest revelation came on a day Conyers met with the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus for what the group's chairman, Rep. Cedric Richmond, called a "candid conversation about the seriousness of the allegations against him."

"Any decision to resign from office before the ethics investigation is complete is John's decision to make," Richmond said in a statement after the meeting.

Conyers was first elected in 1964 and was one of the founding members of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., said he met with Conyers on Tuesday to let him know he was concerned for him.

"I think he should go home and talk to his constituents and listen to them and make a decision based on that," Thompson said.

Conyers missed two roll call votes in the House Tuesday evening.

Some of the Detroit Democrat's House colleagues are calling for him to step aside.

Democratic Rep. Kathleen Rice of New York was joined Tuesday by Rep. Pramila Jayapal from Washington state in calling for Conyers to step down.

A senior Democratic aide said House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi has been putting pressure on Conyers to resign from the chamber. The aide spoke on condition of anonymity to reveal private conversations.

The House Ethics Committee is investigating allegations against Conyers, who has denied the accusations and refused to resign. He announced Sunday that he would step aside as the top Democrat on the Judiciary Committee.

Separately Tuesday, the House's top Democrat said in a letter to the ethics panel that it should move quickly with its inquiry.

ACROSS THE NATION

24-year-old man arrested in Tampa serial killings

TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—Police arrested a man late Tuesday and said they will charge him with murder in a string of killings that have terrorized a neighborhood of Tampa. Tampa Police Chief Brian Dugan announced at a news conference that Howell Emanuel Donaldson, 24, would be charged with four counts of first degree murder. Police detained Donaldson earlier Tuesday after a tip that he had a gun at a McDonald's restaurant. Four people have been killed in the Seminole Heights neighborhood of Tampa since Oct. 9. Police have said the shootings were in the same area and could be the work of a serial killer. Dugan said the department had received more than 5,000 tips. He thanked those who called in the tip that led to Donaldson's arrest. No further information was provided about Donaldson.

Suspect in custody after shots ring out at Nevada high-rise

RENO, Nevada (AP)—A suspect is in custody after opening fire for at least 20 minutes Tuesday night at a high-rise building of luxury condominiums in Reno, Nevada, but there are no reports of any injuries, authorities said. The shots were fired at the Montage, a building in downtown Reno where SWAT teams and news vans have gathered. The building is surrounded by some of the city's better known casinos and was once a casino itself before it was converted into luxury condos, according to its website. Reno police tweeted that they were answering reports of a possible active shooter before tweeting about a half-hour later that the suspect had been detained and there were no injuries reported. Trooper Chris Kelley of the Nevada Highway Patrol told the Reno Gazette-Journal that shots were heard from the building for at least 20 minutes, and TV news reporters said they heard several shots after arriving. The gunfire, which was coming from an upper floor, immediately brought comparisons to the deadly mass shooting two months earlier in Las Vegas, which is 450 miles (724 kilometers) south. On Oct. 1, a gunman killed 58 people from a perch at the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino.

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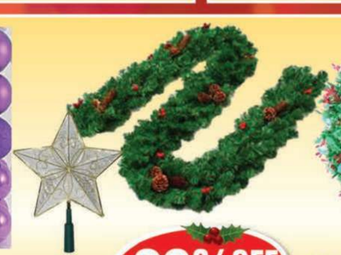

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Asia

Bali volcano ash drifts 4.7 miles high

KARANGASEM, Indonesia (AP)—An erupting volcano with a deadly history on Indonesia's Bali, one of the world's most popular resort islands, has spread drifting ash 7,600 meters (4.7 miles) into the atmosphere and closed the island's international airport for a third day Wednesday.

Authorities have told 100,000 people to leave an area extending 10 kilometers (6 miles) from Mount Agung as it belches grey and white ash plumes, the low clouds hanging over the volcano at times hued red from the lava welling in the crater. The volcano's last major eruption in 1963 killed about 1,100 people, but it's unclear how bad the current eruption might get or how long it could last.

Officials extended the closure of Bali's international airport for another 24 hours due to concerns the thick volcanic ash could harm aircraft.

Airport spokesman Ari Ahsanurrohim said more than 440 flights were canceled Tuesday, affecting nearly 60,000 passengers, about the same as Monday. The closure was in effect until Thursday morning. Without aircraft, getting in or out of Bali requires traveling hours by land and taking a boat to another island, enduring choppy seas in Bali's rainy season.

Ahsanurrohim said Wednesday morning that volcanic ash has not been detected at the airport yet, but observations from the Darwin Volcanic Ash Advisory Center show the ash has reached an altitude of 25,000 feet (7,600 meters) and was being blown southward and southwestward toward the airport.

"I don't know, we can't change it," said stranded German traveler Gina Camp, who planned to go back outside and enjoy another day on the island, which attracts about 5 million visitors a year to its famed resorts and world-class surf spots. "It's nature and we have to wait until it's over."

Experts said a larger, explosive eruption is possible or Agung could stay at its current level of activity for weeks.

"If it got much worse, it would be really hard to think of. You've got a huge population center, nearly a million people in Denpasar and surroundings, and it's very difficult to envision moving those people further away," said Richard Arculus, a volcano expert at Australian National University, adding that an eruption in 1843 was even more explosive than the one in 1963.

"There are many examples in history where you have this kind of seismic buildup—steam ejections of a little bit of ash, growing eruptions of ash to a full-scale stratosphere-reaching column of ash, which can presage a major volcanic event," he said.

A NASA satellite detected a thermal anomaly at the crater, said senior Indonesian volcanologist Gede Swantika. That means a pathway from the storage chamber in the volcano's crust has opened, giving magma easier access to the surface.

Indonesian officials first raised the highest alert two months ago when seismic activity increased. More than 100,000 people living near the volcano fled their homes, many abandoning their livestock or selling them for a fraction of the normal price. The activity decreased by late October, and the alert was lowered before being raised to the highest level again Monday.

Pope preaches forgiveness in first public Mass in Myanmar

YANGON, Myanmar (AP)—Pope Francis urged Myanmar's long-suffering people to resist the temptation to exact revenge for the hurt they have endured, preaching a message of forgiveness Wednesday to a huge crowd in his first public Mass in the predominantly Buddhist nation.

AP

Pope Francis arrives to celebrate Mass in the Kyaikkasan Ground in Yangon, Myanmar, Wednesday, Nov. 29, 2017.

Local authorities estimated some 150,000 people turned out at Yangon's Kyaikkasan Ground park for the Mass, but the crowd seemed far larger. Catholics had to apply to attend through their local churches to enter the park venue, and many dressed in matching outfits or with hats bearing the pope's image.

Francis has said his aim in coming to Myanmar is to minister to its Catholic community, which numbers around 660,000 people, or just over 1 percent of the population of about 52 million.

His trip has been overshadowed, though, by Myanmar's military operations targeting the Rohingya Muslim minority in Rakhine state. The crackdown, which has been described by the U.N. as a campaign of "textbook ethnic cleansing," has drawn international condemnation.

In his first public comments on Tuesday, Francis told Suu Kyi and other government authorities that Myanmar's future lay in respecting the rights of all its people—"none excluded"—but he refrained from mentioning the Rohingya by name. The violence, including the looting and burning of Rohingya villages, has resulted in more than 620,000 people fleeing to neighboring Bangladesh in Asia's worst refugee crisis in decades.

In his homily Wednesday, Francis referred to the suffering that Myanmar's ethnic and religious groups have endured, a reference to the decades of conflicts between Myanmar's ethnic minorities and the military that continue today in parts of the country. Myanmar recently emerged from nearly half a century of military dictatorship, but minorities including the Kachins are still subject to discrimination and other forms of violence.

"I know that many in Myanmar bear the wounds of violence, wounds both visible and invisible," Francis told the crowd in Italian that was translated into Burmese. Although he said the temptation is to respond with revenge, he urged a response of "forgiveness and compassion."

"The way of revenge is not the way of Jesus," he said, speaking from an altar erected on a traditional Buddhist-style stage.

World

President vows to unite Kenyans

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP)—President Uhuru Kenyatta vowed at his inauguration Tuesday to unite Kenyans after months of election turmoil, but violence flared anew as police shot dead at least three people, including a child, when opposition supporters tried to hold a memorial for dozens killed in earlier protests.

Police in the capital, Nairobi, tried to break up the opposition's peaceful gathering for those slain since the political unrest began in August. Opposition leader Raila Odinga, who was shoved into his vehicle amid clouds of tear gas shortly after he called Kenyatta's presidency illegitimate, put the death toll at three.

One was a 7-year-old boy killed by a stray bullet amid the chaos, according to witness Isaac Mekenye.

Associated Press video showed opposition supporters fleeing as gunfire popped, and security forces hitting unarmed people with batons. Other people splashed water from slum puddles into their eyes to wash away the tear gas.

Kenyatta, speaking to a cheering crowd of tens of thousands in Nairobi's Kasarani Stadium, called the past few months "a trying time" for Kenya, and he urged an end to divisiveness and hate.

The recent events show that "our constitution is no piece of paper," he said, but he warned that the country's institutions should not be destroyed whenever they don't deliver the desired results.

Kenya has gone through months of political uncertainty since Kenyatta defeated Odinga in an August election that was nullified by the Supreme Court, which cited irregularities following a challenge to the results by Odinga, and a new vote was ordered. It was the first time in Africa that a court had nullified a presidential election.

Odinga and his supporters then boycotted last month's rerun balloting, saying electoral reforms had not occurred.

The political drama in the East African economic hub has been watched closely across the continent by opposition parties and leaders alike.

Kenyatta said his inauguration to a second term "marks the end, and I repeat the end, of our electoral process." He praised the resilience of Kenyans during the 123 days since the turmoil began.

"To my competitors, and in the spirit of inclusivity, I will endeavor to incorporate some of their ideas," he said. "The election was not a contest between a good dream and a bad dream. It was a contest between two competing visions." He pledged to build bridges to unite the country.

The opposition to Kenyatta is likely to continue its street protests, and human rights groups condemned his government for banning the demonstrations, which are allowed under the constitution.

Odinga said Kenyatta's inauguration was a "coronation," and he called him a dictator, vowing to pursue fresh elections.

Kenyatta was sworn in using a Bible that had been used to swear in his father, founding President Jomo Kenyatta, after independence in 1963. His rivalry with Odinga, the son of Kenya's first vice president, has lasted for years.

Several heads of state attended the inauguration. In a move to improve continental ties, Kenyatta announced that all Africans will be able to obtain a visa on arrival at a port of entry. A growing number of African nations are making moves toward easing travel restrictions across the continent.

Syrian opposition, UN open talks in Geneva, await govt

GENEVA (AP)—The eighth round of Syria peace talks got under way on Tuesday with a revamped and expanded opposition team meeting with the U.N. envoy in Geneva, but President Bashar Assad's government was conspicuously absent and Russia bemoaned back-channel diplomacy among key world powers.

The government in Damascus said its team would show up on Wednesday.

The meeting marks the latest and perhaps most-promising attempt by U.N. Syria envoy Staffan de Mistura to jolt new life into the so-far largely ineffective U.N.-mediated talks. The Syrian civil war, now in its seventh year, has left over 400,000 dead, driven at least 11 million people from their homes, and turned into a proxy war for regional and world powers.

Speaking after he briefed key envoys from the five U.N Security Council member countries behind closed doors, de Mistura confirmed to The Associated Press that the Syrian government had agreed to come Wednesday—after Damascus had reportedly delayed its initial participation.

The pro-government newspaper Al-Watan on Monday reported that Damascus would postpone its arrival, citing the opposition's position that Assad must leave at the start of any political transition—something that is sought under a key U.N. Security Council resolution underpinning the Geneva talks.

De Mistura justified the discreet "P5" meeting by saying it was needed to keep Britain, China France, Russia and the United States informed about his agenda and reinforce the U.N.-mediated peace process, which has come under a challenge from a separate, Russian initiative.

"Now we need to go into business," de Mistura told the AP. "We need P5 support because the two delegations obviously listen to members of the P5."

The meeting included Brett McGurk, the U.S. envoy for the battle against the Islamic State group, and French Foreign Ministry political and security affairs director Nicolas de Riviere—among the highest-level Western envoys on hand so far during Geneva talks.

Russia's ambassador in Geneva, Alexey Borodavkin, was less positive about the back-channel briefing. He said Russia appreciated the "opportunity," but "at the same time, we have some doubts about this kind of format, and do not consider it an established one."

Moscow has sought to take the lead in resolving Syria's conflict by organizing parallel talks between the two sides in the Black Sea resort of Sochi. But those efforts have sputtered as Western powers and de Mistura insist Geneva must remain the primary track for any negotiations.

The Syrian government, with pivotal military support from by Russian and Iranian forces, has made key gains on the ground over the last year.

One of the major questions is whether Assad's envoys will finally sit down face-to-face with the opposition and negotiate.

Focus

Big Tobacco's ANTI-SMOKING ADS begin after DECADE OF DELAY

AP

In this Nov. 14, 2017 photo, Ellie Mixter-Keller poses for a photo with her dog at her home in Wauwatosa, Wis. Mixter-Keller, 62, says she knew the dangers of smoking. She smoked a pack a day for 30 years before quitting 12 years ago. Under a court order, the largest U.S. tobacco companies will be forced to advertise the deadly addictive effects of smoking starting the week of Nov. 26.

WASHINGTON (AP)—Decades after they were banned from the airwaves, Big Tobacco companies return to prime-time television this weekend—but not by choice.

Under court order, the tobacco industry for the first time will be forced to advertise the deadly, addictive effects of smoking, more than 11 years after a judge ruled that the companies had misled the public about the dangers of cigarettes.

But years of legal pushback by the industry over every detail means the ads will be less hard-hitting than what was proposed. Tobacco control experts say the campaign—built around network TV and newspapers—will not reach people when they are young and most likely to start smoking.

"Their legal strategy is always obstruct, delay, create confusion and buy more time," said Ruth Malone, of the University of California, San Francisco, who has studied the industry for 20 years. "So by the time this was finally settled, newspapers have a much smaller readership, and nowadays, who watches network TV?"

The new spots, which begin Sunday, lay out the toll of smoking in blunt text and voiceover statements: "More people die every year from smoking than from murder, AIDS, suicide, drugs, car crashes and alcohol, combined."

Smoking remains the nation's leading preventable cause of death and illness, causing more than 480,000 deaths each year, even though smoking rates have been declining for decades. Last year, the adult smoking rate hit a new low of 15 percent, according to government figures. That's down from the 42 percent of adults who smoked in the mid-1960s.

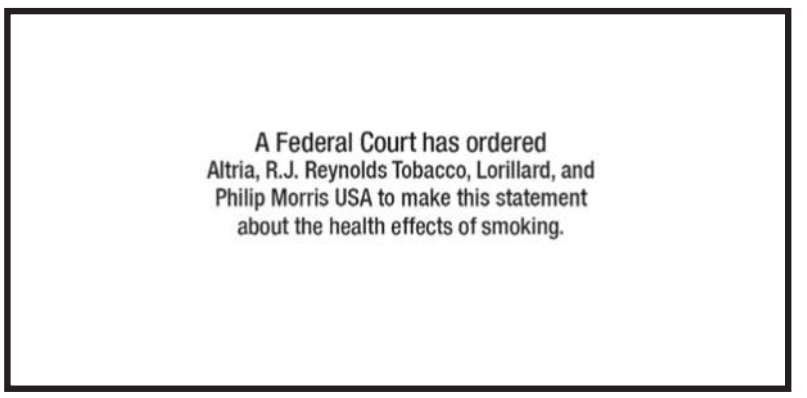
Experts attribute the decline to smoking bans, cigarette taxes and anti-smoking campaigns by both nonprofit groups like the American Cancer Society and the federal government.

The new ads are the result of a 1999 lawsuit filed by the Justice Department under President Bill Clinton which sought to recover some of the billions the federal government spent caring for people with smoking-related illnesses.

A federal judge ultimately sided with the government in 2006, ruling that Big Tobacco had "lied, misrepresented and deceived the American public" about the effects of smoking for more than 50 years. The decision came nearly a decade after U.S. states reached legal settlements with the industry worth $246 billion.

But under the racketeering laws used to prosecute the federal case, the judge said she could not make the companies pay, instead ordering them to publish "corrective statements" in advertisements, as well as on their websites, cigarette packs and store displays.

The campaign will be paid for by Altria Group, owner of Philip Morris USA, and R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co., a division of British American Tobacco.


A Federal Court has ordered
Altria, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco, Lorillard, and
Philip Morris USA to make this statement
about the health effects of smoking.

AP

This undated photo shows a screen shot from a commercial that will air on television starting the week of Nov. 26.

Altria, maker of Marlboros, referred inquiries to a statement it issued last month: "We remain committed to aligning our business practices with society's expectations of a responsible company. This includes communicating openly about the health effects of our products."

Reynolds, which sells Camel cigarettes, did not respond to a request for comment.

Originally the U.S. government wanted companies to state that they had lied about smoking risks. But the companies successfully challenged that proposal, arguing that it was "designed solely to shame and humiliate." An appeals court ruled the ads could only be factual and forward-looking.

Even the phrase "here's the truth," was disputed and blocked. "Here's the truth: Smoking is very addictive. And it's not easy to quit," read one proposed message.

"This was a classic case of a very wealthy set of defendants willing to appeal every conceivable issue time and time again," said Matthew Myers of the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, one of several anti-tobacco groups who intervened in the court case.

More than half a century ago, American media was saturated with tobacco advertising. Cigarettes were the most advertised product on TV and tobacco companies sponsored hundreds of shows, including "I Love Lucy," ''The Flintstones" and "Perry Mason." People smoked almost everywhere, in restaurants, airplanes and doctor's offices.

Congress banned cigarette advertising from radio and TV in 1970 and subsequent restrictions have barred the industry from billboards and public transportation. Yet companies still spend more than $8 billion annually on marketing, including print advertising, mailed coupons and store displays.

Anti-tobacco advocates estimate the upcoming TV advertisements will cost companies a tiny fraction of that, about $30 million. The broadcast ads will air five times per week for one year and the newspaper ads will run five times over several months in about 50 national daily papers.

Robin Koval, president of Truth Initiative, has seen mock-ups of the TV ads in court and says they are not very engaging.

"It's black type scrolling on a white screen with the most uninteresting voice in the background," said Koval, whose group runs educational anti-tobacco ads targeting youngsters.

Nine of 10 smokers begin smoking before age 18, which is why most prevention efforts focus on teenagers. Yet less than 5 percent of today's network TV viewers are under 25, according to Nielsen TV data cited by Koval's group. While lawyers were hammering out the details of the TV advertisements, consumers increasingly switched to online social media sites and streaming services like Facebook, YouTube and Netflix.

A former smoker who was shown the mock-up ads called them terrible.

"They weren't very compelling ads, "said Ellie Mixter-Keller, 62, of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, who smoked a pack a day for 30 years before quitting 12 years ago. "I just don't know if I would have cared about any of that."

Environment

Red wolves have roamed North Carolina for decades. A key Senate panel could hold their future

By BRUCE HENDERSON
THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER

CHARLOTTE, N.C.—A key U.S. Senate committee has urged a federal wildlife agency to end a 30-year effort in North Carolina to save endangered red wolves from extinction.

The news was part of the Senate Appropriations Committee's $32 billion spending bill for the Department of Interior and environmental agencies, released last week. It adds fuel to mounting pressure by North Carolina's wildlife commission and landowners to halt the program.

Red wolves were declared extinct in the wild in 1980. Wolves from a captive population were re-released in North Carolina in 1987 and are the only remaining red wolves in the wild. The shy, secretive animals weigh 45 to 80 pounds as adults.

In an explanatory statement with the bill, the Appropriations Committee acknowledged the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission's request in 2015 that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service end the program and declare red wolves extinct.

"The program has failed to meet population goals for the red wolf and has impacted North Carolina landowners and the populations of several other native species," the statement read. "The committee encourages the (Fish and Wildlife) Service to consider ending the program in fiscal year 2018 and expects the service to work closely with the (state commission) during fiscal year 2018 as it determines further actions on this matter."

The wolves' numbers have dropped by nearly half in recent years largely because they're being illegally killed.

In 2013, federal biologists estimated that 90 to 110 red wolves roamed a five-county area in northeastern North Carolina called the Albemarle Peninsula. By 2016, those numbers were down to 45 to 60 wild wolves. Suspected or confirmed gunshots accounted for 17 of the dead wolves since 2013 and suspected "illegal take" such as trapping added five more.

Rewards totaling $20,000 were offered for information in the illegal poisoning of a wolf in January.

U.S. Sen. Thom Tillis, a Republican from Mecklenburg County, has also called for an end to the wolf program. Tillis told a U.S. House committee last year that more than 500 private landowners have asked that the federal government keep wolves off their land.

"Before we do anything more in North Carolina, I think it makes the most sense to shut the program down to figure out how to do it right and build some credibility with the landowners," Tillis said then. "There is a less than respectful history of dialogue between folks in North Carolina and the Fish and Wildlife Service. This is going to be an issue my office will be focused on for as long as I'm a U.S. senator."

The Fish and Wildlife Service has not said it would end the program. But last year the agency proposed changes that would allow it to move wild wolves into its captive-breeding program, which holds about 200 wolves. The changes would limit wolves to federal land in Dare County alone instead of the largely private land they now roam in five counties.

A public comment period on the proposal that ended in July prompted more than 12,000 responses. Wildlife advocates who analyzed the comments reported overwhelming support for keeping wild wolves in North Carolina.

"This overwhelmingly positive response sends a crystal clear message: Americans support red wolf conservation and want the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to do the right thing and restore this species throughout its native range in the southeastern United States," Jamie Rappaport Clark, a former Fish and Wildlife director who is now president of Defenders of Wildlife, said in an August statement. "The service needs to roll up its sleeves and put in the time and effort needed to bring this species back from the brink of extinction."

TNS

A key U.S. Senate committee has urged a federal wildlife agency to end a 30-year effort in North Carolina to save endangered red wolves from extinction.

He found a sick bird. Send it over in an Uber, the rescue center said.

By HOWARD COHEN
MIAMI HERALD

MIAMI—A Miami Uber driver had precious cargo after the call came in from the Pelican Harbor Seabird Station, a wildlife rehabilitation center on the 79th Street Causeway.

The passenger, a sick red-tailed hawk, was carefully wrapped in a towel and tucked inside a cat carrier.

Gary Klemme found the hawk on his street in Miami Lakes. He contacted Pelican Harbor, where he had volunteered many years ago.

They called Uber and sent a driver to his home to get the bird. The driver was there in five minutes.

The bird arrived at the nonprofit center about 15 minutes later.

The bird's Uber journey began when Klemme, 63, a retired postal worker, rode his bike near his Miami Lakes condo after a nasty rainstorm recently. He spotted the wild bird on the sidewalk of the tree-lined block.

Klemme slammed on his brakes. "I'm a bird aficionado," he explained. "It was wet and dark. She couldn't hold her head up and had a white film on her eyes."

TNS

Pelican Harbor Seabird Station Wildlife Rehabilitation Manager Yaritza Acosta accepts a patient that was sent to the hospital via Uber.

Klemme had an idea what had happened to the majestic hawk: Poison.

Hurricane Irma debris attracted vermin so poison had been used to kill rats. Judging by the bird's general listlessness — she had no upper body motor skills but was able to sink its talon into Klemme's finger — he figured the bird must have consumed a poisoned rat.

With one hand on the bird, and the other on his cell phone, he snapped a picture, sent it off to his daughter, who had also volunteered at the center, and forwarded the image to Pelican Harbor.

The center has spent a little more than $4,000 on Uber transport for injured birds in 2017 from over 250 Uber rides — or about $16 per ride, according to Pelican Harbor executive director Christopher Boykin.

"Roughly 20 percent of our patients arrive to us via Uber," Boykin said. "We use it a lot. It keeps our staffing at the clinic, caring for the animals. Cuts down on patient's treatment time. The animal gets treated in half the time. We include Uber in our grants [requests.] We ask the foundation to help fund Uber transport."

In 2015, Pelican Harbor used Uber for about 5 percent of its 2,000 patients. This year, the number has grown to 20 percent, Boykin said.

The strangest Uber drop off?

An 8-pound piglet on Christmas Day in 2014, Boykin said.

Pelican Harbor was founded in 1980 to care for injured brown pelicans and has since evolved into a center for seabird rehabilitation. But with an animal-loving staff of volunteers, Boykin said the center has become open to the, well, unusual.

"With all our staff and its bleeding hearts, we've become better known as an any-kind-of-injured-wildlife-center," he said, with a chuckle. The emaciated piglet was delivered to the center's door by an Uber driver.

"We ended up naming the pig Uber. We thought it was a pot-bellied pig that had been abandoned but what it was, was a boar," Boykin said.

When the animal grew to about 25 pounds, Pelican Harbor shipped the rehabilitated "Uber" off to a no-kill center.

"In the past, we've seen Uber used to help out in different ways during difficult circumstances. We're grateful our service has helped these injured animals get assistance when they need it the most," said Uber spokesman Javier Correoso.

As for the red-tailed hawk, Douglas Giraldo, the center's rescue and release coordinator, rang Klemme up with some bad news: The bird died.

"More than likely it ate a rat that had been infected. Unfortunately, she didn't make it," Giraldo said. "Our goal is to get these guys back into the wild. That is where they belong. For that type of poisoning that's somewhat of a long recovery. They would need to be able to have full strength and be able to fly right."

Klemme was crestfallen.

Life & Style

Jay-Z leads Grammy noms with 8 as rap, R&B take center stage

This combination photo shows music artists, from left, Khalid, Alessia Cara, Lil Uzi Vert, Julia Michaels and Sza who were nominated for a Grammy Award for best new artist on Tuesday, Nov. 28, 2017. AP

NEW YORK (AP)—Jay-Z is the leader of the 2018 Grammy Award nominations in a year where the top four categories are heavily dominated by rap and R&B artists, giving the often overlooked genres a strong chance of winning big.

The Recording Academy announced Tuesday that Jay-Z is nominated for eight honors, including album, song, and record of the year. Bruno Mars is also nominated for the big three, while Kendrick Lamar—who earned seven nominations—and Childish Gambino are also up for major awards.

Jay-Z's personal and revealing album, "4:44," is nominated for album of the year alongside Mars' 90s-inspired R&B adventure "24K Magic," Lamar's hard-hitting rap masterpiece "DAMN.," Gambino's funk-soul project "Awaken My Love!" and Lorde's critically acclaimed pop album, "Melodrama."

Record of the year nominees include Jay-Z's "The Story of O.J.," a song about blackness and managing money that also references O.J. Simpson; Mars' Top 5 hit, "24K Magic"; Lamar's No. 1 smash, "Humble"; Gambino's "Redbone," which peaked at No. 12 on the Hot 100; and the year's biggest hit, "Despacito," by Luis Fonsi, Daddy Yankee and Justin Bieber.

"Despacito" is also nominated for song of the year—a songwriter's award—along with Mars' No. 1 hit, "That's What I Like"; the title track from Jay-Z's "4:44"; rapper Logic's suicide prevention anthem, "1-800-273-8255"; and "Issues" by Julia Michaels, the singer who has written hits for Bieber, Selena Gomez and other pop stars.

Michaels is also nominated for best new artist, where R&B and rap rule again: Her competition includes singers SZA, Khalid and Alessia Cara, as well as rapper Lil Uzi Vert.

No rock or country acts were nominated in the top four categories. The rap- and R&B-heavy nominations, which include numerous black and Latino artists, come after the Grammys were criticized earlier this year when some felt Beyonce's multi-genre "Lemonade" album should have won album of the year over Adele's "25." Adele also expressed that Beyonce should have received the prize.

The win for Adele, though, marked another year when the Grammys awarded its biggest prizes to an artist outside of the rap or R&B genre. Kanye West, Eminem, Mariah Carey and others have also lost in the top categories over the years to pop, rock and country acts despite owning the year in music, critically and commercially.

"We have a current membership that is savvy and certainly timely, is current, and reflective of what music is about today and in the future. And clearly the diversification work that we've done for our membership is evident in all of the nominations this year," Neil Portnow, the academy's president and CEO, said in an interview. "I think it's a testimony to our hard work and intention of having a very vibrant, current, relevant, diverse voting membership."

Jay-Z or Lamar could make history next year when the Grammys take place in New York City on Jan. 28, 2018: Either album could become only the third rap-based album to win album of the year; and either song could become the first in the rap genre to win record or song of the year.

"4:44," which includes songs about Jay-Z's relationship with Beyonce and family life, marks the rap icon's first nomination for album of the year as a lead artist; it is Lamar's third in the top category. Lamar will compete with Jay-Z in all seven categories he is nominated in, including best rap album, best rap song, best rap performance, best rap sung performance and best music video.

Mars is behind Jay-Z and Lamar with six nominations, including best R&B album, best R&B song and best R&B performance. Gambino, better known as Emmy- and Golden Globe-winning actor Donald Glover, scored five nominations.

Others who earned five nominations include SZA, Khalid and No I.D., who produced Jay-Z's album and is up for non-classical producer of the year.

Ed Sheeran, who has the second best-selling album of the year with "Divide," was snubbed in the top categories. "Divide" earned a nomination for best pop vocal album, while his No. 1 hit, "Shape of You," is up for best pop solo performance.

Nominees for best pop vocal album include Lady Gaga's "Joanne," Coldplay's five-song EP "Kaleidoscope," Imagine Dragons' "Evolve," Lana Del Rey's "Lust for Life" and Kesha's "Rainbow," marking her first Grammy nomination. Kesha, who has been in a legal war with former mentor and producer Dr. Luke, is also nominated for best pop solo performance for "Praying."

Leonard Cohen and Chris Cornell are both nominated for best rock performance; other deceased nominees include Glen Campbell, Gregg Allman and Carrie Fisher, who is nominated for best spoken word album, where Bernie Sanders, Mark Ruffalo and Bruce Springsteen are also nominated.

In the country categories, Chris Stapleton leads with three nominations. Miranda Lambert, who earned two nominations, was surprisingly shut out of best country album though her double album, "The Weight of These Wings," was a critical favorite.

Others who earned multiple nominations include Pharrell, Ledisi, Nothing More, Alison Krauss, Daniel Caesar and Foo Fighters. Randy Newman's song "Putin," his sardonic ode to Russian President Vladimir Putin, is nominated for best arrangement, instruments and vocals.

Black, Latino acts rule Grammy noms

NEW YORK (AP)—The Recording Academy sent a clear message when they announced the nominees for the 2018 Grammys: They want to see a black or Latino act have a better shot at winning in the major categories.

Black and Latino musicians dominated in the top four categories, including album and song of the year, giving those acts who perform rap, R&B and Latin music a strong chance at taking home the biggest awards, usually reserved for pop, rock and country musicians, or white artists.

In the past, acts like Beyonce, Kanye West, Eminem and Alicia Keys were leaders in nominations, but would never win awards like record of the year.

This year there is a shift.

Jay-Z, rap's most powerful force, is the top nominee with eight, the academy announced Tuesday. Jay-Z's nominations include album, song and record of the year.

"It's just time," said No I.D., who produced Jay-Z's entire "4:44" album and is nominated in the top three categories alongside the rap icon. "I believe that when you really make the best music you can make from your heart, it will transcend all of those stereotypes, color issues, everything, because music is really made for human beings."

Kendrick Lamar, another artist who has never won album, song or record of the year despite multiple nominations, is also up for the top prize with his third effort, "DAMN." Other album of the year nominees include Bruno Mars' "24K Magic," Childish Gambino's "Awaken, My Love!" and Lorde's "Melodrama," making the New Zealand singer the only white act up for the prize.

Justin Bieber, a featured guest on Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee's ubiquitous hit "Despacito," is the only white performer nominated for record of the year. Bieber and singer-songwriter Julie Michaels are the only white nominees for song of the year. And Michaels is the only white act up for best new artist; she will compete with SZA, Khalid, Alessia Cara and Lil Uzi Vert.

Neil Portnow, the academy's CEO and president, said the organization took time this year to work hard at diversifying its voting membership, which includes more than 13,000 people.

"You look at the nominations this year and I think that's clearly a reflection of the fact that we've done a lot of good work there," he said.

The Grammys has a long history of black and Latino artists, as well as rap and R&B acts, losing in major categories despite appearing as the clear front runner. The organization was criticized earlier this year when Adele's "25" album won album of the year over Beyonce's "Lemonade." Though Adele's project outsold Beyonce's, "Lemonade" was viewed as an artistic, bold and daring project that truly owned the year. Even Adele said Beyonce should have won instead of her.

But, now, Jay-Z's own work of art may bring the Carters the gold. Though "4:44" debuted at No. 1, it is not Jay-Z's best-selling album nor does it have multiple hits like his past projects. However, his 13th album has been viewed as a brave and personal album revealing stories about his life and showcases that, at 47, he is still relevant and a cultural force in music, where youngsters tend to dominate.

"I'm really happy Jay had the 100 percent courage to really open up and that's where I think this connection comes from—I think this is a genuine moment that people know in their hearts, like, 'This wasn't a trick ... this was the opening up of a human being giving us something special,'" said No I.D.

Aspiring actress details allegations against Weinstein

NEW YORK (AP)—An aspiring actress who met Harvey Weinstein by chance in 2014 detailed in tears Tuesday how she said the media mogul made her stand in front of a mirror in his hotel room in Cannes, France, while he stood behind her, groping her and forcing her to perform a sex act after pretending to be interested in her career.

Kadian Noble, 31, filed a lawsuit in federal court in Manhattan a day earlier. Her attorney Jeff Herman said he sued under a criminal sex trafficking statute of engaging in commercial sex act overseas because Weinstein is a U.S. citizen who coerced Noble under the guise of helping with her career.

"By offering Kadian help with her career, and then getting her to comply with his advances—that's the quid pro quo," Herman said. The lawsuit seeks unspecified damages.

A spokeswoman for Weinstein said he "denies allegations of non-consensual sex" and "has further confirmed that there were never any acts of retaliation against any women for refusing his advances."

AP

Kadian Noble cries as she recounts a sexual assault by Harvey Weinstein during a news conference in New York, Tuesday, Nov. 28, 2017.

Noble detailed the incident to reporters, saying that she met Weinstein by chance in 2014 at an after-party for the British Academy Film Awards, where he introduced her to Oprah Winfrey and Naomi Campbell, and she felt dazzled and lucky when he said he was interested in her.

He told her to contact an assistant and send them a demo reel. Later that year, he approached her in a hotel lobby at Cannes, which flattered her, and he suggested they look at her reel in his hotel room, she said. But when she got up there, it slowly dawned on her he was after something else.

"He was repeating to me, 'I need to know that you really like me,'" she said. "At this point it became a little bit confusing but still I had a lot of hope."

He grabbed her arm and stood her in front of a mirror where he groped her and then forced her to perform a sex act, she said.

"And I kept saying no, and I just felt so stupid. But at the same time a massive part of me had shut down. It makes no sense that I didn't run out of the room. And all I was able to do was just say no."

She said after the incident, his assistants never got back to her. Eventually she detailed the assault to one, who tried to convince her that he was a "good guy."

The worst part for Noble, she said, is it ruined her dream of becoming an actress. She never got a part in a film and has since stepped away from the profession. She felt like her career was going to take off after meeting him—but it was all a lie, she said.

"People believe in you," she said, addressing Weinstein. "It's not been fair that you've used the power, the gift you have, you've turned it into such a corruption."

Noble, who lives in London, said she reported details of the crime to the NYPD in recent weeks, which is investigating claims against Weinstein; police officials have said they are referring cases to other jurisdictions as necessary. Police in London, Los Angeles and Beverly Hills are also investigating Weinstein after at least 75 other actresses, models and others have come forward to detail alleged conduct by Weinstein ranging from sexual harassment to forcible rape. Meanwhile, New York police have said a 2010 rape allegation here is credible and may result in criminal charges.

Another civil lawsuit was filed Monday in London by a different woman who was not identified. Her attorney Jill Greenfield says her client was seeking damages for "personal injury" plus expenses and "consequential loss" arising out of a series of sexual assaults by Weinstein. Civil claims for rape and sexual assault are uncommon in Britain.

Post story on failed sting is valuable journalism lesson

NEW YORK (AP)—With a thwarted sting and dueling videos, the clash between the Washington Post and conservative advocates Project Veritas led University of Minnesota professor Jane Kirtley to toss aside the intended topic for her media ethics class on Tuesday. The news was irresistible.

The Post's story Monday that exposed the group's attempt at deception, along with the newspaper's earlier work on Alabama Senate candidate Roy Moore, is valuable beyond the classroom as an illustration of how journalism works at a time "fake news" has become part of the lexicon, she said.

"This is how good journalists do their jobs and how they don't get taken in by hoaxes," said Kirtley, an expert in media law in Minnesota. "It's such an important lesson."

The Post described how a woman affiliated with Project Veritas, a group that has used disguises and hidden cameras to uncover supposed liberal bias among journalists, sought to convince Post reporters that she had been impregnated by Moore when she was 15 and had an abortion—all of which was false.

Detail by detail, the newspaper outlined how it began to doubt Jaime Phillips' story, all before anything was printed. She told a Post reporter that she had spent only a summer in Alabama decades ago, but her mobile phone had an Alabama area code. The company where she claimed to work had no record of her. Finally, a researcher located a Web page under the woman's name seeking money to move to New York for a job in the conservative media movement.

She was later spotted by Post reporters walking into the New York office of Project Veritas.

Suddenly, the newspaper had a much different story.

"It was such an amazing piece of journalism," said Dan Kennedy, a professor at Northeastern University. "One can only imagine the world of hurt we'd all be in journalism if the Post had been taken in" by the ruse, he said.

Instead, Project Veritas and its controversial leader, James O'Keefe, were exposed in an act that "does nothing but hurt the cause of conservative journalism," said Brent Bozell, founder of Media Research Center, one of the longest-running organizations critical of liberal bias in the media.

Bozell called it a "shameful" act of deceit, an effort at entrapment through misleading means.

"If this was a liberal, we'd all be screaming from the highest rooftops," Bozell said. "Let's be honest."

Asked to comment on Bozell's statement, Project Veritas spokesman Stephen Gordon said: "We have no response. Watch our next video."

Project Veritas and the Post released dramatically different videos of an encounter between O'Keefe and Post reporter Aaron C. Davis, who had come to the organization's headquarters to interview him about Phillips. O'Keefe asked questions about two "sting" videos featuring Post employees, which Davis said he was not aware of. Davis repeatedly asked O'Keefe if Phillips worked for Project Veritas, and O'Keefe ignored the questions—exchanges that were edited out of the video released by Veritas.

Shortly after the Post story was posted, O'Keefe sent a fundraising letters to his supporters noting that after months of work, "our investigative journalist embedded within the organization had their cover blown."

His group also released videos of the two Post employees, reporter Dan Lamothe and Joey Marburger, director of products, involved in a conversation with an offscreen questioner about the newspaper. Lamothe talked about how much coverage President Donald Trump received, while Marburger discussed Post owner Jeff Bezos' role in the newspaper's slogan, "Democracy Dies in Darkness." A Post spokeswoman had no comment on the videos Tuesday.

Like Kirtley in Minnesota, Northeastern's Kennedy has spent time with his classes going line-by-line through one of the Post's stories—in this case, the Nov. 9 investigation that detailed the experiences of four women who said they were teenagers when Moore, then in his 30s, dated them. In one case that allegedly involved sexual contact, the girl was 14 years old.

The Post explained in meticulous detail how it came upon the story when a reporter who was writing about Moore's supporters was told about then-prosecutor Moore's involvement with teenagers. Six times the Post interviewed Leigh Corfman, the woman who alleged the encounter when she was 14. Reporters spoke to her mother and friends from that time—in all 30 people who said they knew Moore between 1977 and 1982. Election records were checked to confirm none of the women donated to Moore opponents. Corfman's history was checked through public records, revealing she'd filed for bankruptcy three times and was once charged with a misdemeanor for selling a beer to a minor.

Spielberg's 'The Post' crowned year's best by NBR Awards

NEW YORK (AP)—Steven Spielberg's newspaper drama "The Post" was named the year's best film by the National Board of Review, which also lavished its top acting honors on the film's stars, Meryl Streep and Tom Hanks.

The group announced its picks Tuesday on Twitter. Though the organization spread its awards around, it reserved three of its top slots for Spielberg's upcoming period film about The Washington Post's publishing of the Pentagon Papers. Streep plays Washington Post publisher Katharine Graham and Hanks plays editor Ben Bradlee in the film, one of the year's last-arriving awards contenders.

The National Board of Review, a collection of film enthusiasts and academics founded in 1909, is better known for packing its annual awards dinner (to be hosted by Willie Geist on January 9) with big names than for predicting Oscars. Its last three winners were "Manchester By the Sea," ''Mad Max: Fury Road" and "A Most Violent Year," none of which went on to win best picture.

But momentum is a cherished quantity in Hollywood's awards season, and the trio of awards give "The Post"—considered a timely tribute to a free press—a resounding early win.

The day after taking home three awards at Monday's Gotham Awards, Jordan Peele's horror sensation "Get Out" took an award for best ensemble, as well as best directorial debut.

Greta Gerwig's "Lady Bird" landed two awards: best director and best supporting actress for Laurie Metcalf. The coming-of-age tale, starring Saoirse Ronan, is increasingly looking like a major contender, boasting the most widely reviewed 100 percent fresh Rotten Tomatoes score in the website's history. Ronan also won best actress at Monday's Gotham Awards.

After taking the top prize at the Gothams, Luca Guadagnino's "Call Me By Your Name" came away from the NBR announcement with a single honor: Timothee Chalamet for breakthrough performance.

Best supporting actor went to Willem Dafoe ("The Florida Project"), Paul Thomas Anderson landed best original screenplay for his "Phantom Thread," and "The Disaster Artist" scribes Scott Neustadter and Michael H. Weber won for adapted screenplay.

Other awards included the board's Spotlight Award to Patty Jenkins and Gal Gadot for "Wonder Woman" and two winners for its Freedom of Expression Award: Angelina Jolie's Cambodia drama "First They Killed My Father" and John Ridley's documentary "Let It Fall: Los Angeles 1982-1992."

Spring wedding at Windsor Castle for Prince Harry and Markle

LONDON (AP)—It will be a spring wedding on the glorious grounds of Windsor Castle for love-struck Prince Harry and Meghan Markle.

Royal officials—thrilled with the international response to news of the couple's engagement, and the positive reaction to their first ever TV appearance—revealed a few key details Tuesday but kept mum on others, such as who will be Harry's best man?

The wedding will be in May, but the date has not been chosen, Harry's communications secretary, Jason Knauf, told a packed briefing at Buckingham Palace.

"In a happy moment in their lives, it means a great deal to them that so many people throughout the UK, the Commonwealth and around the world are celebrating with them," he said before fielding questions about things like how many of Markle's rescue dogs would move to Britain with her.

Knauf said Harry's grandmother, Queen Elizabeth II, had given permission for the couple to wed at St. George's Chapel, the historic church on the Windsor Castle grounds that has long been a touchstone for royal rites of passage. He said the 91-year-old monarch will attend the wedding.

AP
Britain's Prince Harry and Meghan Markle pose for the media in the grounds of Kensington Palace in London, Monday Nov. 27, 2017.

Windsor Castle, west of London, is one of the queen's favorite residences. St. George's, the 15th-century chapel where the couple will wed, is more intimate than Westminster Abbey, where Harry's older brother, William, married Kate Middleton in 2011.

Knauf said Windsor "is a very special place for Prince Harry," and that he and Markle have regularly spent time there since they began dating about a year and a half ago.

He said the wedding "will be a moment of fun and joy that will reflect the characters of the bride and groom."

The image-conscious royals also made clear in a statement that the royal family, not British taxpayers, will foot the bill for what is expected to be a grand extravaganza. The family will pay for the church service, the music, the flowers, the decorations and the reception that follows.

Harry's press team is keeping some details private for the moment—perhaps because final decisions have not been made.

It's also not clear who will be Harry's best man, though older brother William would seem to be a strong contender.

Knauf also would not say whether Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby will preside over the service. And as for what titles will be given to Harry and Markle, that will be decided by the queen and revealed at a later date.

The palace was ready to answer some delicate questions about the 36-year-old Markle's move to Britain and her taking up a senior role in the royal family, sometimes called "the firm."

Knauf said she will comply with all immigration requirements and will become a British citizen, a process that may take several years, and will retain her U.S. citizenship throughout the process.

He did not say whether she would drop her U.S. citizenship at some point.

Asked about her religion, Knauf said Markle is a Protestant who will be baptized in the Church of England, which is headed by the queen in a largely ceremonial role.

Markle's personal belongings are being shipped from Canada, where she has lived for seven years while performing in the TV legal drama "Suits," to Nottingham Cottage, where she and Harry will live. The cottage is located on the grounds of Kensington Palace in central London.

She has already brought one of her two rescue pups, Guy, but the other—Bogart—is being left behind and will reside permanently with "good friends," Knauf said.

The union of the 33-year-old prince and Markle, an accomplished TV actress in her own right, represents a blending of Hollywood and royalty that is expected to draw an international audience—officials said it is a safe assumption that the service will be televised.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Judge told to act 'without delay' on Meek Mill bail request

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—An appeals court has told a Philadelphia judge to act "without further delay" on Meek Mill's nearly 2-week-old request to be freed. The state Superior Court issued the order Tuesday as it rejected a request from the rapper's lawyers that it grant him bail, leaving that to the sentencing judge to decide. Mill's attorneys contend the sentencing judge has refused to respond to their appeals. The 30-year-old Philadelphia native was sentenced this month to two to four years in prison for violating probation on a roughly decade-old gun and drug case. Mill's probation officer and a prosecutor had recommended that he not be jailed. The judge cited a failed drug test, his failure to comply with court-ordered travel restrictions and two unrelated arrests in ordering him locked up.

White House-CNN feud spills over into Christmas party

WASHINGTON (AP)—CNN says it is boycotting this year's White House media Christmas party. The news network says in a statement that "In light of the President's continued attacks on freedom of the press and CNN, we do not feel it is appropriate to celebrate with him as his invited guests." The network adds that it will be sending a "reporting team" to Friday's event to cover any news that develops from it. White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders is responding on Twitter, saying: "Christmas comes early! Finally, good news from @CNN." President Donald Trump has repeatedly bashed CNN as "fake news" and tweeted over the weekend that CNN International represents the U.S. "to the WORLD very poorly." He said, "The outside world does not see the truth from them!"

Woman's marriage deadline may be working against her

DEAR ABBY: I am a 27-year-old woman who can't seem to find a man to call her own. Every time I search on websites or at gyms, I can't find anyone decent who lives nearby.

I met someone who took me to his house in Wisconsin for the holidays, but I live in Illinois. Ever since I slept with him (on the fifth date), he has come here less often -- and when he does, it's never just to see me. He also texts less often than he did and has hinted that I should see other people here in town and keep him as a backup.

I'm desperate to find someone who will be there for me. I want to be married before my 30th birthday. I have tried everything, but all the decent men nowadays are already taken or not serious about forming a relationship. Hope you can help.

CAN'T FIND A MAN

DEAR CAN'T: Your problem may be your desperation. When people are desperate, their anxiety can drive people away. The idea that you must be married by the time you are 30 is setting an artificial—and possibly unrealistic—goal for yourself.

It may be time to stop looking and begin concentrating on building a satisfying life for yourself without help from a partner. Once you accomplish that, you may find that both men and women find you more attractive to be around. I can't guarantee that it will help you to find a husband, but even if you don't, you will have a happier life. Not everyone needs to be married.

DEAR ABBY: I have twin grandsons. One is kind, mannerly and thoughtful. The other is rude, ungrateful and has a chip on his shoulder.

Every Christmas and birthday, my husband and I are generous with our gifts to them. One grandson thanks us, while the other does not even acknowledge the gift. I no longer want to continue giving the rude twin gifts, but I don't know if this is the way to deal with the problem. They will be 18 on their next birthday.

My daughter has never corrected the problem, and I know she will accuse me of favoring the kind twin. What to do?

GRAN IN SOUTH CAROLINA

DEAR GRAN: If it were me, I'd give the grateful twin gifts worth the usual amount of money and the ungrateful one a token present. And when your daughter accuses you of favoritism, tell her she's absolutely right and also why you no longer felt inclined to shell out to someone who didn't think your generosity was worth acknowledging. It's the truth.

DEAR ABBY: I am 53 and constantly worry about the future. Because my husband has had to change jobs for various reasons, we have no money fund for retirement, and it isn't offered at his current job. I worry so much about the future that it's keeping me from enjoying the present. How can I stop worrying like this so I can enjoy the present? Talking to a doctor is not an option as money is very tight.

WORRYING TOO MUCH

DEAR WORRYING: You didn't mention whether you are currently employed. If you aren't, a way to fix your problem might be to start thinking about your own earning capacity and find a job so you can build a retirement fund. It's never too late to start.

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

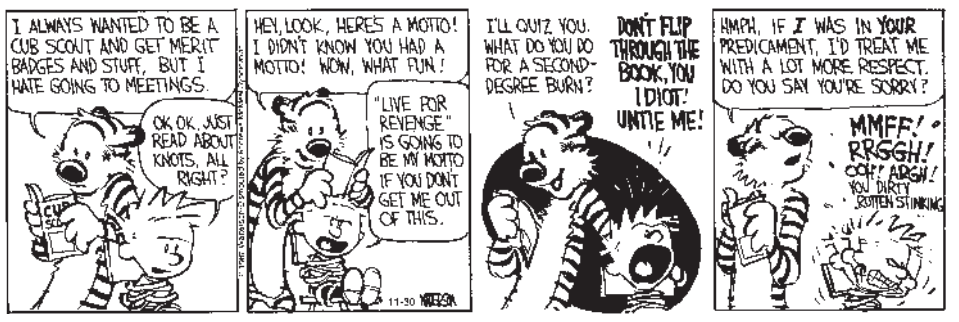
By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


I ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A CUB SCOUT AND GET MERIT BADGES AND STUFF, BUT I HATE GOING TO MEETINGS.
OK OK, JUST READ ABOUT KNOTS, ALL RIGHT?
HEY, LOOK, HERE'S A MOTTO! I DIDN'T KNOW YOU HAD A MOTTO! WOW, WHAT FUN!
"LIVE FOR REVENGE" IS GOING TO BE MY MOTTO IF YOU DON'T GET ME OUT OF THIS.
I'LL QUIZ YOU. WHAT DO YOU DO FOR A SECOND-DEGREE BURN?
DON'T FLIP THROUGH THE BOOK, YOU IDIOT! UNTIE ME!
HMPH. IF I WAS IN YOUR PREDICAMENT, I'D TREAT ME WITH A LOT MORE RESPECT. DO YOU SAY YOU'RE SORRY?
MMFF! RRGGH! COH! ARGH! YOU DIRTY ROTTEN STINKING

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

WELL, I DID IT AGAIN! I FELL OFF THE ROOF TRYING TO PUT UP DECORATIONS! I LANDED RIGHT ON MY HEAD!
I'M OKAY NOW, THOUGH
ARE YOU GOING TO ANSWER THE PHONE, OR SHOULD I GET IT?
YOU GET IT
JIM DAVIS 11-30

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

SO YOU'RE GONNA BE IN SOME COFFEE BOOK?
THE "WHO'S WHO OF THE WORLD'S COFFEE DRINKERS." THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
FOR $300?
YEP. SWEET DEAL, RIGHT?
I'M SIX, AND EVEN I KNOW IT'S JUST THE "WHO'S WHO OF SCHMUCKS WILLING TO COUGH UP $300."
SHH. YOU CAN HEAR MY G-RATING GOING UP.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

GULP GULP
THEY SAY YOU SHOULDN'T DRINK TOO MUCH GATORADE JUST AFTER WORKING OUT.
WORKING OUT? I HAD A CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIE CAUGHT IN MY THROAT.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

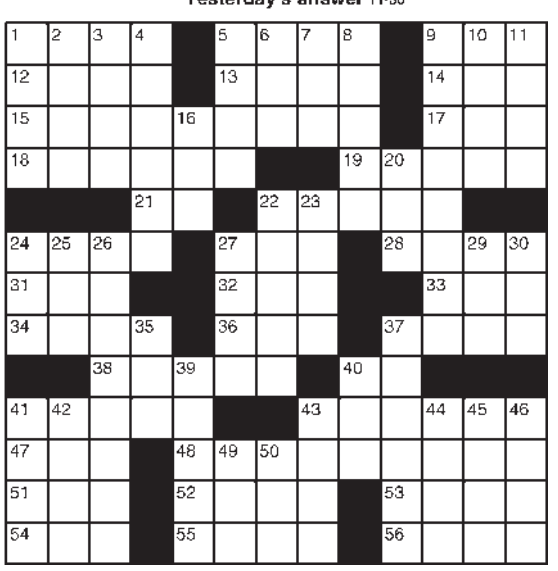
ACROSS
1 Juanita's home
5 Pack cargo
9 Poke
12 "Exodus" author
13 Bern's river
14 — -de-France
15 DiMaggio nickname
17 Olympics chant
18 Focused at work
19 Mustard city
21 "Forget it!"
22 Joe of "Good-Fellas"
24 — vu
27 Bumped into
28 Six-sided state
31 Flightless bird
32 Green prefix
33 Lanka lead-in
34 Weakling
36 Fellow
37 Sugar unit
38 Breakfast strip
40 — and fro
41 Bakery smell
43 "Amen to that!"
47 G-K connection
48 No-nonsense TV jurist
51 Poem of praise
52 Nullify
53 Downwind
54 However
55 — -do-well
56 Repair

DOWN
1 Stephen King pooch
2 "East of Eden" son
3 River deposit
4 Capital of Kazakhstan
5 Foundered
6 Mahal preceder
7 Acapulco gold
8 Garden spoilers
9 Japanese martial art
10 To boot
11 Noggin
16 Equal (Pref.)
20 Post-op area
22 Praline nut
23 Harrow rival
24 Morning moisture
25 Brit. record label
26 Big Boeing plane
27 Office note
29 Branch
30 Trendy
35 Nonstick spray
37 Blockage
39 Bayou cuisine
40 Menlo Park monogram
41 "Hi, sailor!"
42 Carousel, for one
43 Composer Stravinsky
44 Hold sway
45 Genesis garden
46 Ogled
49 French article
50 HST follower

Solution time: 24 mins.

R	E	A	_	■	C	O	P	■	A	G	R	A
A	T	T	A	■	H	E	R	■	G	E	A	R
P	R	O	T	R	U	D	E	■	O	R	S	O
S	E	P	T	I	C	■	P	E	N	T	A	D
■	■	■	E	L	K	■	S	T	I	R	■	■
A	B	A	■	E	L	O	■	A	Z	U	R	E
L	A	P	D	■	E	L	I	■	E	D	E	N
L	A	T	E	R	■	E	M	S	■	E	R	T
■	■	I	S	L	A	■	P	I	C	■	■	■
A	R	T	I	S	T	■	A	R	A	R	A	T
S	O	U	R	■	S	O	L	I	T	U	D	E
O	L	D	E	■	E	W	E	■	E	B	O	N
H	E	E	S	■	A	N	U	■	H	E	S	I

Yesterday's answer 11-30



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Kaley Cuoco, 32; Elisha Cuthbert, 35; Ben Stiller, 52; Billy Idol, 62.

Happy Birthday: The frustrations you have suffered in the past are ending, and it's important to take advantage of the opportunities that lie ahead. Collaborate with people who are as upbeat and eager to advance as you are, and you'll find a way to turn your ideas into a reality. Intelligence coupled with energy and enthusiasm will lead to success. Your numbers are 8, 11, 24, 26, 31, 35, 42.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Aim high. Use your intellect and discipline to bring about the changes that will make your life better. A change in location, hangouts or hobbies will lead to new friendships and potential gains. Offer initiative and leadership. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Get personal finances and documents in order. Make updates that need to be put into play before the year comes to a close. A contract or deal you are working on should be handled with precision. Pay close attention to detail. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Get along with your peers and do your best to fit in. How you handle others will make a difference in how fast you advance. Anger and frustration will lead to added stress that can affect your health. Take time to rejuvenate. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Don't worry about what others do. Focus on what you want to accomplish and stick to your plans. Socializing or networking events will offer interesting information that you can use to your advantage when it comes to making plans. ✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Put everything in its place and don't leave any room for error. Not everyone will be rooting for you to do well. Don't take information offered as being factual. Go to the source before you make a statement or a decision. ✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Start planning your next move. Set up meetings or interviews or plan a business trip. Getting everything in order and being fully prepared will give you the confidence to market what you want to pursue. Take advantage of an opportunity. ✪✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Being impulsive can be a good thing if it helps you overcome procrastination. Make decisions for yourself and don't worry about what others think. Relationships are featured and plans can be made that will improve your popularity. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Unexpected changes in regard to your profession will come as a surprise. You will excel if you go with the flow and live in the moment. Adapting to the current economic trends will lead to new interests and opportunities. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Take your responsibilities seriously. The more you accomplish, the better you will feel. Make your environment comfortable and convenient. Update features that will make your place more inviting and entertaining. Host an event or organize a networking session. ✪✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Use intelligence to sort through any differences you are faced with. If someone becomes unpredictable or explosive, walk away. Taking the high road will prove you are in control and a better leader than anyone who opposes you. ✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* If you work alongside people who have the same goals as you, you will reach your target quickly and make new allies at the same time. Choose your battles wisely and protect against injury and minor illness. Keep the peace. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* A partnership will tempt you. Consider what's expected of you and the best way to handle negotiations. Having a plan in mind will help you avoid being broadsided by someone who tries to take advantage of your trust and loyalty. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are positive, energetic and well-liked. You are playful and competitive.

To submit astrological questions to the "Dear Eugenia" column, visit Eugenialast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	3						4	
2			8	7				5
			6		9			
	6	5				4		
	2			3			1	
		4				8	9	
			3		5			
1				6	4			8
	7						2	

Difficulty Level ★★★ 11/30

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

9	6	1	5	2	4	3	7	8
8	7	3	1	6	9	5	4	2
4	2	5	3	8	7	9	6	1
3	9	6	2	7	5	1	8	4
7	5	8	9	4	1	6	2	3
2	1	4	8	3	6	7	5	9
1	8	2	6	5	3	4	9	7
6	3	7	4	9	8	2	1	5
5	4	9	7	1	2	8	3	6

Difficulty Level ★★★ 11/30

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

STILL SINGIN' LIONEL RICHIE'S MUSIC **Solution: 12 letters**

E	V	O	L	H	O	L	L	E	H	A	Y	H	W	T
S	N	E	V	O	L	S	S	E	L	D	N	E	H	E
U	I	E	A	S	Y	L	L	Ⓟ	E	P	Y	R	A	N
O	G	S	E	L	A	E	Ⓞ	E	I	B	E	E	T	D
H	H	L	U	O	S	Ⓟ	P	A	D	E	M	U	Y	E
K	T	R	C	H	E	S	N	O	T	A	I	Q	O	R
C	T	N	A	N	S	O	O	I	E	S	F	N	U	H
I	R	O	L	O	I	G	M	R	I	L	O	O	A	E
R	A	L	L	E	R	E	D	N	I	C	R	C	R	A
B	I	I	J	U	S	T	G	O	N	O	G	P	E	R
A	N	A	N	G	E	L	L	U	C	Y	O	E	I	T
B	G	S	L	T	H	I	N	K	H	T	T	N	L	L
Y	S	A	X	O	P	H	O	N	E	O	N	N	G	E
S	D	R	O	W	U	O	Y	Y	A	S	A	Y	M	E
Y	N	I	T	S	E	D	Y	M	Y	L	O	V	E	F

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Angel, Baby, Brick House, Call, Cinderella, Conquer, Deep, Dream, Easy, Endless Love, Feel, Goodbye, Gospel, Hello, I Forgot, Just Go, Lady, Lucy, My Destiny, My Love, Night Train, Oh Love, Oh No, Penny, Piano, Pop, Rise, Rock, Sail On, Saxophone, Say Me, Say You, Se La, Sing, Soul, Tender Heart, Think, Three, Times, Truly, What You Are, Why, Words

Yesterday's Answer: Formula One

Treasuries 13 through 26 can be purchased online in time for the holidays at WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480.

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FAMILY GARAGE SALE

WHAT?	**Family Garage Sale**
WHEN?	**Saturday, December 2, 2017 7:30am - 11:30am**
WHERE?	**Rai St., Gualo Rai (Locate Gualo Rai Basketball Court. Heading South, it's the 5th house on your right. House is beige with white French windows.**

ITEMS TO BE SOLD

Electric hot pot, citrus juicer, Christmas decors, punch bowls, Birkenstock slippers, purse, clothes, sleeping bags, luggage, toys, large wooden table with chairs, beach chairs, Wii games, baby strollers, baby tubs, and many more!!!

Domingo E. Dones
PO Box 503135 Saipan MP 96950
Pro Se

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

DOMINGO E. DONES, Petitioner, vs. VIOLETA B. SALES, Respondent) FCD-DI-CIVIL ACTION NO. 17-0405) **SUMMONS**

TO: VIOLETA B. SALES

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is given to you herewith within thirty (30) days after service of the Summons upon you and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to Domingo E. Dones whose mailing address is PO Box 503135 Saipan MP 96950 as soon as practical after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Court for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of Court at Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to file an answer in accordance with this Summons, judgement by default may be taken against you for relief in the complaint.

Dated this 22nd day of August, 2017.
/s/
Clerk of Court

Commonwealth Zoning Board Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, December 05, 2017
5:00 PM, Governor Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center, Susupe
Tel: 234-9661 • Fax: 234-9666 • www.zoning.gov.mp

A. Preliminary Matters
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of 11/09/2017 meeting minutes
5. Public Comments *(not related to files for discussion under item B. Public Hearings)*

B. Public Hearings:
1. **Conditional Use Application #2017-3788:** Jiang Zhen Group dba Shanghai Guest House is proposing to occupy an existing 4-storey building structure consisting of 8 units to operate a motel. This use is classified as "Hotel/Motel" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This project is located on Lot No. H.86-1 in Sadog Tasi. This area is zoned as Rural.
2. **Conditional Use Application #2017-4537:** YES Corporation dba YES Bed & Breakfast is proposing to occupy an existing 7-bedroom residential home and rent out 5 units for its Bed & Breakfast establishment. This use is classified as "Bed & Breakfast" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This project is located on Lot No. 003 I 30 along Tarakitu Street in San Antonio. This area is zoned as Village Residential.

C. Communication
D. Old Business
E. New Business
1. Operations Reports (Permitting & Enforcement/Public Hearing Procedures)

F. Executive (Closed) Session
G. Miscellaneous
a. Other Matters
b. Announcements
c. Next Meeting

H. Adjourn

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the Board meeting, or if you require assistance, please contact the Zoning Administrator, Therese T. Ogumoro, at 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & 10 CMC 3511, et seq.).

/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Zoning Board Chairman

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Saipan Tribune
Sports
Yankees weather rain, Royals comeback
PAGE 25
Rota resident director for Finance Office and acting Rota Municipality treasurer Vivian Ogo Hocog was arrested and taken to Saipan on Friday for allegedly embezzling between $15,000
Lt. Gov. Hocog's son's signature allegedly forged in business license
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ADS	(PRINT)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$15	$30
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Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

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Antetokounmpo powers Bucks past Kings

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 19 of his 32 points in the third quarter, helping the Milwaukee Bucks beat the Sacramento Kings 112-87 on Tuesday night.

Eric Bledsoe had 21 points, five assists and five rebounds for the Bucks, who won for the second time in five games. Khris Middleton scored 12 points.

Milwaukee led by as many as 36 and won despite not scoring a second-chance point.

Antetokounmpo scored 11 points in the first quarter, but was at his best coming out of halftime. He went 6 for 8 from the field in the third, including a rare 3-pointer.

It was Antetokounmpo's eighth 30-point game this season.

Milwaukee has won three straight against Sacramento.

The Bucks were crisp early, but they didn't pull away until a 20-3 run midway through the second quarter. Bledsoe scored 11 during the run, and Middleton made two free throws to put Milwaukee up 61-34 at halftime.

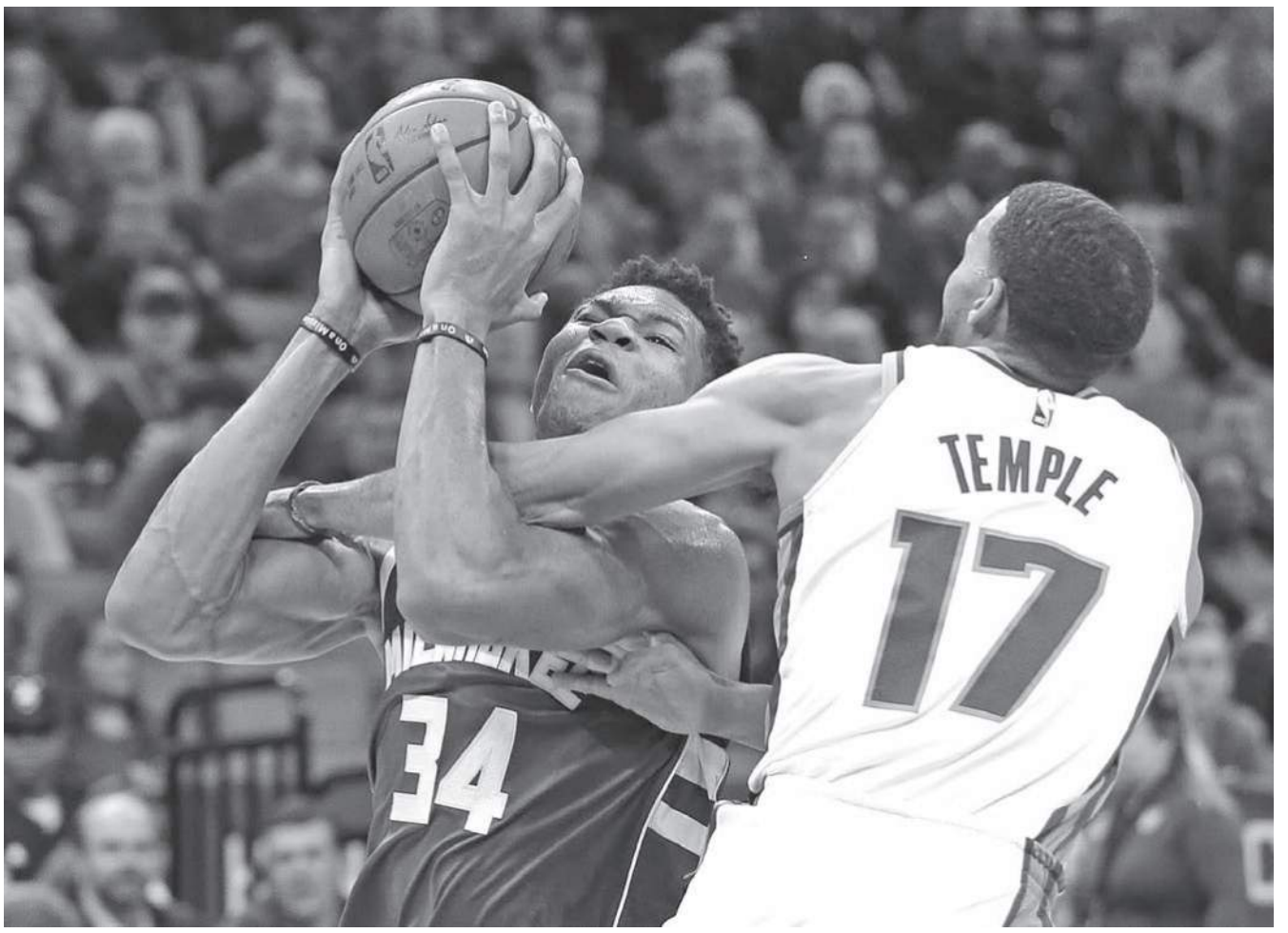
Garrett Temple scored 18 for the Kings, and Buddy Hield added 13 points. Willie Cauley-Stein had 10 points and 10 rebounds.

Sacramento came out flat and never recovered, one day after rallying in the fourth quarter to beat the short-handed Golden State Warriors.

Even after Bucks coach Jason Kidd emptied his bench in the fourth quarter, Sacramento struggled to get the lead under 30.

The Kings committed 11 turnovers in the first half and repeatedly allowed Antetokounmpo to get into the paint for easy buckets.

Jason Terry, who spent a few brief moments with the Kings in 2014 before being traded to Houston, was booed every time he touched the ball. He made a 3-pointer that put the Bucks up 92-56.



AP

Milwaukee Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo, left, is fouled by Sacramento Kings guard Garrett Temple during the first quarter of an NBA basketball game, Tuesday, Nov. 28, 2017, in Sacramento, Calif.

Cavaliers 108, Heat 97

In Cleveland, LeBron James lost his cool. Kevin Love and Cavaliers stayed just as hot.

Incensed at not getting a foul called on a drive to the basket, James was ejected for the first time in his illustrious career on Tuesday night, tossed in the third quarter of Cleveland's 108-97 win over the Miami Heat.

Love scored 32 of his 38 points in the first half and James added 21 as the Cavaliers extended their winning streak to nine.

With the Cavs leading by 23, James, who had attempted just one free throw at that point, drove the length of the floor and drew contact from Miami's James Johnson and Dion Waiters. When he didn't hear a whistle, James screamed and gestured toward referee Kane Fitzgerald, who quickly called a technical and pointed for the three-time champion to leave the floor.

It was the first time James had been thrown out in 1,082 career NBA games, and he said it was a first since he started playing basketball as a boy in Akron.

"On that particular play I got fouled all the way up the court, from the time that I stripped him (Johnson) all the way until I got to the rim, and so that's what it's about," James said. "I said what I had to say and I moved on, but he (Fitzgerald) thought that I should get two of them, so it is ... we got the win and that's most important."

James has long complained about not getting calls near the basket, and hinted that his eruption may have been caused by pent-up frustration.

"I'm one of the league leaders in points in the paint," he said. "I drive just as much as anybody. At this point, it's almost like they're trying to turn me into a jump shooter. I can't be a jump shooter. I'm not a jump shooter. I watch games every single night and I see jump shooters going to the line multiple, double-digit times every night.

"I'm not a jump shooter and I get fouled just as much as everybody else, so it's going to the line one time, three times or four times, that's not what it's about."

Fitzgerald said he couldn't let James' actions go unpunished.

"It was a culmination of a couple different acts," he told a pool reporter. "Immediately after the no-call, he turned and threw an air punch directly at me and then he aggressively charged at me and then he used vulgarity in my ear a few times."

Love had his way with every defender Miami put on him, finishing 10 of 16 from the field and 14 of 17 on free throws. He scored 22 in the first quarter and the Cavs opened a 27-point lead before halftime.

Wizards 92, Timberwolves 89

In Minneapolis, Otto Porter Jr. hit a 22-foot jumper with 25 seconds remaining, lifting Washington to the victory.

Washington trailed for nearly the entire fourth quarter. After Porter's jumper, Minnesota had two shots at the other end but couldn't convert.

The Wizards got the ball back with 4.2 seconds remaining when the ball went out of bounds off Timberwolves forward Taj Gibson. Officials originally ruled that Minnesota maintained possession, but a review overturned the call and gave the ball to Washington.

Porter led Washington with 22 points, and Kelly Oubre Jr. had 16.

Karl-Anthony Towns had 20 points and 15 rebounds for Minnesota for his league-leading 18th double-double.

Jazz 106, Nuggets 77

In Salt Lake City, Derrick Favors scored 24 points, and the Jazz put away the Nuggets with a dominant second half.

Rookie Donovan Mitchell added 16 points as Utah matched a season high with its third straight victory. Jonas Jerebko had 15 and Ricky Rubio finished with 13 points.

The Jazz outscored the Nuggets 58-28 in the second half.

Gary Harris scored 14 of his 18 points for Denver in the first half, and Kenneth Faried had 11 points and eight rebounds.

Suns 104, Bulls 99

In Chicago, Devin Booker scored 33 points, and Phoenix held on for the road win.

Booker looked just fine after sitting out a game because of inflammation in his right big toe, nailing five 3-pointers and grabbing nine rebounds.

T.J. Warren scored 25 for Phoenix, and Alex Len tied a career high with 18 rebounds. The Suns dominated on the glass 57-41 while snapping a three-game losing streak.

The rebuilding Bulls are a league-worst 3-16 after dropping their sixth straight.

Justin Holiday made six 3-pointers on his way to 25 points for Chicago. Kris Dunn added 24 points and eight assists.

Woods says he's on the 'other side' of pain, loving life

NASSAU, Bahamas (AP)— Tiger Woods says he is on the "other side" of too many years relying on pain medication to cope with his back surgeries, which led to his arrest on a DUI charge six months ago that he attributed to a bad mix of prescription drugs.

"I'm loving life now," he said Tuesday.

Woods is making yet another return to competition this week at the Hero World Challenge, an 18-man event with no cut at Albany Golf Club. It's his first tournament in 10 months and his first time competing since fusion surgery in April, the fourth operation on his back.

Early indications are that Woods is in a much better spot than when he returned a year ago in the Bahamas. According to those who played with him in recent weeks, his swing looks faster and more fluid, and Woods appears to be happy and healthy.

Woods reached a low point on Memorial Day when he was arrested in the middle of the night after Florida police found his car parked awkwardly on the side of the road about 15 miles from his home, with Woods asleep behind the wheel, the engine running and a blinker on.

Toxicology reports revealed that Woods had two painkillers (Vicodin and Dilaudid), a sleep drug (Ambien), an anti-anxiety drug (Xanax) and the active ingredient for marijuana in his system. He went through an in-patient treatment program to deal with prescription medication, and last month pleaded guilty to a reckless driving charge that allowed him to avoid jail time.

"I've come out the other side and I feel fantastic," Woods said. "A lot of friends have helped me. I didn't realize how bad my back was. Now that I'm feeling the way I'm feeling, it's just hard to imagine that I was living the way I was living with my foot not working, my leg not working and then the hours of not being able to sleep at all because of the pain."

Woods attributed the Memorial Day arrest to "trying to go away from the pain."

"I was trying to sleep, which I hadn't done in a very long time because of the things I've been dealing with," he said. "So as my back improved, I've been able to start sleeping again because I don't have the nerve pain going down my leg. I don't have my leg twitching all over the place. I don't have these issues anymore."

Woods hasn't won since the 2013 Bridgestone Invitational, his 79th title on the PGA Tour that leaves him three short of tying Sam Snead's record. That might have been the last time he had reasonable health.

There were small signs of back pain a week later at the PGA Championship, and what followed were three surgeries and a stop-and-start schedule. Woods had his first back surgery, a microdiscectomy, a week before the 2014 Masters. Since then, there have been four occasions where he returned either from back surgery or from taking time off to let his injuries heal.

The fourth surgery was to fuse two discs in his lower back. That was more about the quality of life than trying to win a golf tournament. The fact that Woods is even playing his holiday exhibition just over seven months after surgery, and six months after that embarrassing arrest, feels like a bonus.

"I missed playing golf for fun," Woods said. "I hadn't done that in two years. I played nine holes here and 18 holes here, and then I have to take three days off because my back was killing me."

Woods returned from a 15-month layoff a year ago at the Hero World Challenge, and while he finished 15th in the 18-man field, he made 24 birdies, raising hopes.

Stanton has Giants and all playing waiting game

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Can someone call the gas company? The pilot under baseball's hot stove has gone out.

Nearly a month has passed since the Astros won the World Series, and the trade and free-agent markets have been still. Deals that ordinarily start rolling in around Thanksgiving have not happened.

The Giants and other teams that are pursuing Stanton, the National League's Most Valuable Player in 2017, are paralyzed waiting for the Marlins to decide where to deal him. The $295 million left on his contract, an opt-out and full no-trade rights make any trade extremely complex.

The Giants have been in on Stanton since the summer, recognizing how a player who hit 59 home runs last season instantly could change an offense that finished last in the majors in slugging and home runs.

Even teams with no interest in Stanton are affected by the deliberate manner in which the Marlins are proceeding. Many of these teams have interest in other players whom Miami expects to trade, including left fielder Marcell Ozuna and second baseman Dee Gordon, but the Marlins seem reluctant to deal them before they see what they get for Stanton, both in players and salary relief.

Meanwhile, free agents are reluctant to sign contracts before the big-money teams pursuing Stanton— such as the Giants, Cardinals, Red Sox and Dodgers—are ready to look past the Marlins and bid for them instead.

The result has been gridlock. The biggest free-agent signing was starting pitcher Doug Fister to the Rangers for one year and $3.5 million. The one trade of note has been the A's sending Ryon Healy to the Mariners for reliever Emilio Pagan and a minor-league infielder.

"We're just waiting for this to happen, like the rest of the industry, so we can get on with the offseason," said one big-league executive whose team is not believed to be pursuing Stanton.

The view that Stanton has cooled the hot stove is pervasive, though not unanimous.

Mets general manager Sandy Alderson said the early date of Thanksgiving, when talks usually slow, is another reason.

"Things have been quiet, but I don't believe Stanton has been holding up everything," Alderson said. "I expect activity to pick up between now and the winter meetings."

They begin Dec. 10 in Orlando.

AP

Miami Marlins' Giancarlo Stanton waits for the pitch during the eighth inning of a baseball game against the Washington Nationals, Wednesday, Aug. 30, 2017, in Washington.

A native of the Los Angeles neighborhood of Panorama City, Stanton's desire to play for the hometown Dodgers might be one reason for the drawn-out trade talks. Jon Morosi of MLB.com reported Monday that the Dodgers are his first choice, and he is reluctant to approve a deal with any other club before Miami's front office, under a new ownership group headlined by Derek Jeter, gets a true read on the Dodgers' ability and desire to make the deal.

The Giants have a lot of work to do besides their pursuit of Stanton. They say they need a defensive upgrade in center field, a stable third baseman and bullpen help.

Like other teams, they can wait only so long for Stanton, and general manager Bobby Evans typically has concurrent trade and free-agent negotiations with other teams and players while pursuing a deal.

So the question becomes, when do they move on from Stanton? At what point do they become so anxious about filling their roster holes that they start aggressively bidding for other players and completing trades?

According to sources, the Giants are not there yet. They do not have to be because none of the other teams is rushing to complete deals, either.

A few trades could materialize by Friday's deadline for teams to tender contracts to all of their players. Teams that plan to "non-tender" certain players usually try to trade them first to get something for them. Otherwise, the players become free agents.

The other wild card is Ohtani, the two-way Japanese player for whom all big-league teams are expected to bid. Some teams might forestall decisions on other available pitchers until Ohtani picks a team. Ohtani, though, is not expected to hold up the trade and free-agent markets the way Stanton has because, after all, teams have just one chance in 30 to land him.

In Texas, right-hander Doug Fister spent a lot less time on the free agent market this offseason, finalizing a $4 million, one-year deal Tuesday with the pitching-needy Rangers.

After being unsigned last season until May, Fister became the first of this year's 166 major league free agents to complete a big league contract and the first to switch teams.

"The Rangers approached me with a quality offer, and I figured it was definitely a fair one, and I think that was something we both can benefit from," Fister said. "That's kind of why I went ahead and went with it."

Asked if his experience last year made him want to move a bit more quickly this offseason, Fister responded, "I'm sure that it had something to play into all of this."

Fister moves into a Rangers rotation that had only left-handers Cole Hamels and Martin Perez signed for next season. Fister will get a $3.5 million base salary for next year, and the contract includes a $4.5 million team option for 2019 with a $500,000 buyout.

The 33-year-old right-hander agreed last May to a minor league deal with the Los Angeles Angels. He made three Triple-A starts before he requested his release and was claimed off waivers by Boston.

Fister made his debut with the Red Sox on June 25, and went 5-9 with a 4.88 ERA while starting 15 of his 18 games. He had a seven-start stretch from July 1-Sept. 6 when he went 5-2 with a 2.79 ERA and held opponents to a .194 batting average. He earned $956,284 in base salary plus $450,000 in performance bonuses for starts, a total of $1,406,284.

"I really feel like I've reverted back to some of my old ways, of pitching philosophy and physical mechanics," said Fister, who also got his sinker back.

World Cup draw set for Friday in Kremlin

NEW YORK—The countdown to the 2018 World Cup in Russia begins in earnest this Friday, when the draw for next summer's football extravaganza takes place at 15:00 GMT in Moscow's fabulous State Kremlin Palace.

Thirty-two teams will contest the finals which will be held at 12 venues in 11 cities across Russia from June 14 to July 15. The teams will be split into eight groups of four (marked A-H). It won't be an open draw, as the teams are divided into four pots, based on their official FIFA rankings.

Pot One constitutes the top-ranked sides in the tournament (Germany, Brazil, Portugal, Argentina, Belgium, Poland and France) as well as hosts Russia, who are automatically placed in position 1, in Group A. England are in Pot Two along with Spain, Peru, Switzerland, Colombia, Mexico, Uruguay and Croatia. The real minnows are in Pot Four and that includes teams such as Panama, appearing in their first World Cup finals and Saudi Arabia, who have only once reached the knockout stages (in 1994).

Each group will consist of one team from each of the four pots. An additional complication in the draw is that no group can contain more than two teams from the European Football Association or more than any one team from any other football federation. This is to give each group a truly 'global' feeling.

The top two teams in each group after all the games have been played then go into the last sixteen knockout stage, which begins on June 30, 2018.

The permutations are almost endless, but we do already know who won't be playing each other in the group stage, namely teams who are in the same pot. So England for instance won't have to face Spain, Uruguay or Croatia in the first round of the competition. Russia won't have to play World champions Germany.

This will be the 21st World Cup and some very strong trends from past tournaments can be identified.

The World Cup appears wide open with 32 teams theoretically in contention, but time after time it's the same old members of the footballing aristocracy who make it into the final. Since 1958 there have only been four first time winners (England 1966, Argentina 1978, France 1998, and Spain 2010). An incredible 13 of the 20 World Cup finals (65%) have featured either Germany/West Germany or Brazil, while only four finals (and only two since 1938) have not featured either Germany/West Germany, Brazil or Argentina.

The percentage call therefore has to be to zoom in on previous winners—with Germany, who have such a great record in the competition and France (winners in 1998 and finalists in 2006) making the most appeal—and Argentina and Brazil added to forecasts for the finalists.

Paire FC U15 wins 3 games in Guam

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Paire Football Club's girls U15 team had a respectable showing in the 2017 GFA Fall Gobblefest Weekend after winning three of their five matches in Guam.

Head coach Patricia Coleman, in a message to *Saipan Tribune*, said Paire players won their first two games, dropped the next two, and then prevailed in their last assignment to make a good account of themselves in the competition that ran from Nov. 23 to 25 at the GFA Training Center in Dededo. The team was composed of Cathyn Reyes, Aaliyah Indalecio, Anisa Villagomez, Patricia Surima, Summer Manahane, Kyna Sales, Doris Ayuyu, Pyper Liske-Clark, Erin Frink, and Miles River with Nadia Murphy and April Liske-Clark as assistant coach and team nurse, respectively.

GUAM FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION PHOTOS
Paire Football Club U15, left, and Quality Distributors players kick the ball during their game in the 2017 GFA Fall Gobblefest Weekend last Friday in Guam.

Paire got off to a strong start in the Guam Football Association-organized tournament after crushing Quality Distributors last Friday, 5-0. Five different players scored for Paire with Villagomez drawing first blood, while Manahane, Ayuyu, Surima, and Frink also hit the board for the winning squad.

Coleman's wards met Quality Distributors anew last Saturday and earned another shutout victory, 3-0. Manahane, Surima, and River were the scorers for Paire, which played four matches last Saturday and lost its next two, bowing to Kanoa and the Islanders in similar scores, 3-0.

"Paire girls got to see some of Guam's U15 national players on Islanders in action. We created some chances to score, but defensively we made some major mistakes and Islanders capitalized on those mistakes," Coleman said.

For its last game, Paire dueled the Southern Cobras and the visiting team eked out a 1-0 win, thanks to River's goal.

"It was a very close match with some excellent saves and defending by goalkeeper Cathlyn Reyes. Both teams played very hard to the end and this was probably our best match overall," Coleman said.

Gatmaitan, Aguon rule SEDA banquet tourney

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Masters division most valuable player Gilbert Gatmaitan teamed up with Sally Aguon to rule the Saipan Electronic Darts Association Awards Banquet Tournament held last Sunday at the Charley's Cabaret of the Pacific Islands Club Saipan.

Gatmaitan and Aguon breezed through their opponents, winning all of their six games—including consecutive victories against Ben Aguon and Allan Delica.

They went home with $130 each, a trophy and two Bud Light beach chairs after beating Ben Aguon and Delica in the finals. Gatmaitan and Sally Aguon first met and beat their finals opponent in the semis, while Ben Aguon and Delica dropped to the losers bracket.

Ben Aguon and Delica then bested the pair of Jayson John and June Orencia in the losers bracket to earn another crack at Gatmaitan and Sally Aguon. The ending, however, was the same with Sally Aguon and Gatmaitan asserting their mastery over their semis opponents.

Gatmaitan and Sally Aguon opened up their title bid with a victory over the duo of James Tudela and Adelbert Lizama then followed it up with another win against the tandem of Jhun Lambon and Rick Jordan.

Their winning streak continued in the third round as they dispatched the pair of Jess Villar and Chris Omnes. The eventual champions then earned a semis berth after disposing of Jayson John and June Orencia.

The Ben Aguon-Delica partnership, on the other hand, defeated the pairs of Nestor Abing and Lois Blaluk, Gaius Gille and Uly Morales, Warlee Ellama and Peter Igisomar, and Rolly Bermiso and Arman Mendoza before losing to Gatmaitan and Sally Aguon.

John and Orencia, in the loser's bracket, bested the pair of Alfred Hocog and Rod Pergil then eliminated Sam Fabito and Sid Camacho, but their finals hopes were ended by Ben Aguon and Delica in Round 8.

Richard Santos and Hank Magofna, Bobby De Leon and Ton Casil, K.J. VIllagomez, and Frances Magofna, Patrick Rotap and Manuel Castro, Romuel Chavez and Ray Cepeda, Erwin Clavecillas, Adrian Montalbo and Joe Esteves; Greg Sasamoto and Derick Magofna, Pam Ybanez and Elowena Camacho, Carter Calma and J.R. Vito, Jose Orosco and George Medina, Boy Sadiri and Reina Raftang, and Luis Ramos and Larry Achas were the other pairs that competed, but were eliminated early.

Meanwhile, team sponsor 6JMS went home with a total of 12 trophies after the awarding as it won three Bud Light Cup division titles—A, Chichirika, and Fanihi—and also topped the Masters and Fanihi categories in the regular season. They added two runner-up finishes and four third place trophies.

The Venue had six trophies—two Bud Light crowns and one regular season title with two second and one third place awards. Nipa Hut, 9 Eleven, and Jonny's had three awards each, while Naked Fish and Oleai Beach Bar went home with two trophies apiece.

The Beach Flukers placed third in the Chichirika division, while Franken Brau, Naked Fish, The Venue, and VFW each claimed two sportsmanship awards.

RUSSIAN

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participant Chris Lee, and female pros Jamie Wong and Yu Ng Chau.

Japan's Daiseuke Kaneko of Team 7-Eleven and Yasue Nakahara, a member of the Netherlands-based Maaslandster International Women's Cycling squad, will arrive on Saipan tonight via Delta Airlines.

Italian Paolo Caputo, who now races for Hong Kong, will be here on Dec. 1 along with the entire Philippine delegation, led by the 31-year-old Morales. Angelico Ochoa, Lloyd Lucien Reynante, El Joshua Carino, Ronald Lomotos, Mark John Lexer Galedo, and Viel Carino are the other Filipino riders competing in this weekend's road race. The big bulk of the pro riders will arrive in time for the 3pm press conference tomorrow at the Mariana Resort & Spa.

In related news, HOM organizers are reminding the public to drive carefully on Saturday, starting at 6am as bicycle traffic would be heavy around the island. The race starts and ends at the Mariana Resort & Spa main entrance. From the starting line, riders will pass through As Matuis, Sucide Cliff, Bird Island, Grotto, Banzai Cliff, Beach Road, Pacific Islands Club-Saipan, Koblerville, Airport Road, Papago, Kagman, Escos, Kingfisher, Isa Drive, As Terlaje, Middle Road, and back to Mariana Resort.

Race organizers are also asking for the public's cooperation to avoid accidents that happened in previous races. Several riders were nearly hit by passing cars in the San Vicente area going to Isa Drive and also in Beach Road near Joeten Garapan in 2014. Last year, two pro riders had a minor crash in the Suicide Cliff area after crashing into a car that was wrongly parked.

CAROL

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opening round, 4-6, 6-2, 6-1, and then stunned world No. 126 Jiaqi Wang in the second round, 6-2, 6-3, to advance to the quarterfinals. In the Round of 8, Lee lost to 17-year-old Cherry Kim of South Korea, 4-6, 5-7.

Incidentally, Lee could meet Wang again in the Australian Open wild card tournament should the former survive the bottom half of the draw where three other seeded players are out to challenge the CNMI player for the finals berth.

A win over Masuda-Karrasch could pit Lee against No. 7 and China's Meiling Wang, who is set to face unranked compatriot Zhuoma Ni Ma in the opening round. If Lee gets past Wang, the former may duel either No. 5 Keyi Zhou or No. 2 Cody Wong in the semifinals. The world No. 228 Zhou's first round opponent is the unranked Qianhui Tang, also from China, while the world No. 153 Hong is set to meet another bet from the host country in world No. 714 Chengyiyi Yuan.

Jiaqi Wang, who was Lee's partner in the tournament in Korea early this month, is the No. 1 seed in the wild card competition and drew a bye in the opening round to automatically move to the quarterfinals. Joining Wang on the seeded players list at the top half of the draw are No. 6 and world No. 320 Jenny Wong of Hong Kong, and No. 3 and world No. 187 Zheng Hua Xiao and No. 8 and world No. 362 Cong Ying Zhao of China.

Meanwhile, Australian Open 2018 Asia-Pacific Wildcard Playoff tournament director Isabelle Gemmel made special mention of the participation of the two Pacific countries in the qualifier.

"With players from 11 countries competing for the much coveted wildcards, we are particularly pleased to have Abigail Tere-Apisah from Papua New Guinea participating in the women's main draw and also see the Northern Mariana Islands represented as part of the junior girls draw," Gemmel was quoted as saying in the tournament's website.

DAVIS

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Micronesian region. FSM competes as one nation in the Olympics, Pacific Games, and Pacific Mini Games, but usually field separate teams in the Micronesian Games.

Davis, a certified international bodybuilding judge, said they already begun discussions on how they would organize the tournament. "We [NMBPF] already had a meeting last Monday to get the ball rolling for the Micronesian Championships."

"I did send out letters to the various Micronesian Olympic committees and ask them to forward the information to their respective federations. So far, only Guam has responded," said Davis, adding that more information would be available once they finalized some of their plans for the tournament.

"I also asked [board member] Greg Borja to bring this up with countries participating in the Pacific Mini Games. In any case, we will be moving forward with the preparations. More on this as it develops," said Davis.

Davis, in a previous interview, said it will be up to the host federation to determine what categories, weight classes, age, and gender would be featured in the regional competition. Bodybuilding and Physique have different categories for junior or youth, senior, open, and masters divisions.

Meanwhile, the MBC would also serve as Saipan's warm-up event for the 2021 South Pacific Bodybuilding Championships. The island was the awarded the hosting rights for the South Pacific Bodybuilding Championships during last month's competition and SPB Federation's Congress in Honiara, the Solomon Islands. The SPBF board also announced that Fiji will host next year's competition, while the 2019 and 2020 editions will be held in American Samoa and Tonga.

2017 Saipan Electronic Darts Association Bud Light Cup Champions

PHOTOS By JON PEREZ

Nipa Hut Exquisites captain Sally Aguon, left, joins the rest of her teammates after receiving their trophies for winning the Bud Light Cup's Ladies division in the Saipan Electronic Darts Association League during the awards ceremony last Sunday at the Pacific Island Club Saipan's Charley's Cabaret.

Members of the Kingfisher division champion The Venue Parakeyu! pose with their sponsors.

Chichirika division champs 6JMS Scorpions proudly show their trophies.

Players of he 6JMS Mafia I receive the A division trophies.

Fanihi division winners 6JMS Bandits gather for a group photo.

The Venue Lupeyt Boyz players pose with their Tuesday B division trophies.

Players of the Jonny's Serial Killaz display their Flame Tree division championship trophies.

Two members of the Oleai Nakayoshi receive their Masters division trophies.

Antetokounmpo powers Bucks past Kings

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Sports

Stanton has Giants and all playing waiting game

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Carol vies for Australian Open slot

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The CNMI's Carol Lee will try to make it to a Junior Grand Slam event as she competes in the Australian Open 2018 Asia-Pacific Wildcard Playoff Tournament in Zhuhai, China.

Lee is one of the 15 players vying for a wild card entry to next month's Australian Open (Juniors) and is seeded No. 4 in the tournament that started yesterday at the Zhuhai Hengqin International Tennis Centre in Guangdong Province. The Commonwealth bet will have her first game in the wild card event today when she takes on the unseeded Sheena Masuda-Karrasch of Hong Kong.

The 15-year-old Lee, who was ranked No. 216 in the world (moved to No. 212 as of Nov. 27) when she signed up for the competition, is favored against the No. 982 Masuda-Karrasch. The Hong Kong bet is just 14 years old and so far has played 15 singles games in her debut in the ITF Juniors Circuit this year, winning eight of them.

Lee, on the other hand, holds a 42-12 win-loss record in her two years with the circuit and made stops around Asia, the Pacific, Oceania, and Africa this year to join world ranking tournaments. The Commonwealth bet just came from a quarterfinals stint in the 2017 Seogwipo Asia/Oceania Closed Junior Championships—a B1 tournament played in South Korea from Nov. 6 to 12. She slipped past the host's Ji Youn Lee in the

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Carol Lee will be competing in the Australian Open 2018 Asia-Pacific Wildcard Playoff Tournament in Zhuhai, China.

Davis eyes Micronesian bodybuilding tourney

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Northern Marianas Bodybuilding and Physique Federation president John Davis is aiming to hold a regional tournament for Micronesia to further promote the sport and prepare participants for other competitions.

Davis is hoping to organize the Micronesian Bodybuilding Championships sometime next year with Saipan hosting the inaugural tournament. It is not yet known if the competition will be held annually or every two years with hosting rights rotating among Micronesian countries.

The CNMI, Guam, the Federated States of Micronesia—Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, Yap—Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, and Palau make up the

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JON PEREZ
Aaron Tomokane, seen here competing in the 2015 NMI Bodybuilding and Physique Championships, and other local bodybuilders will get a chance to participate in a regional tournament if the Micronesian Bodybuilding Championships pushes through next year.

Russian biker joins the fray

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Russia's Alexandr Dorovskikh will be joining the title hunt in the 11th Hell of the Marianas Century Cycling Race, making this Saturday's event more interesting as he became the 15th pro rider to sign up for the competition.

Filipino biker Jan Paul Morales' title defense bid is now much harder with the last minute entry of Dorovskikh, as the Russian bet is familiar with Saipan road, having competed in the HOM since 2012 and in Tagaman and XTERRA Saipan triathlon races.

Dorovskikh finished fourth in last year's Hell of Marianas with a time of 3:07:57 or more than three minutes behind the 3:04:51 of 10th edition winner Morales, who is racing under the Philippine Navy-Standard Insurance banner. The Khabarovsk City native, who was third in the 2012 HOM, came in second place behind compatriot Konstantin Fast in the 2015 edition. Dorovskikh crossed the finish line in 2:51:41 or 1:19 behind Fast's 2:49:22.

Meanwhile, Team Hong Kong, led by six-time national rider and back-to-back China Cup Road Race champ (2010-2011) Chi Ho Yuen, is set to arrive today.

The 27-year-old Yuen brings with him an impressive credential. He was a consistent Top 5 finisher in races in Milwaukee, Thailand, China, Indonesia, and Taiwan from 2008 to 2011.

Joining Yuen on his flight to Saipan via Hong Kong Express are fellow Hong Kong national riders Tsun Hin Chiu, Jeffrey Wan, and Bryan Wong, and men's 45-49 age group

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JON PEREZ
Aleksandr Dorovskikh, back, rides with compatriot Konstantin Fast as they head out of Kingfisher in this file photo taken during the 2014 Hell of the Marianas. Dorovskikh returns this year, making the race more interesting as he goes up against a tough field of pro riders.